

Autograph hunting

T. A. J. Burnett

BARBARA ROSENBAUM and
PAMELA WHITE (Compilers)

Index of English Literary Manuscripts:
Volume IV 1800-1900, Part I Arnold -
Gissing
831pp. Mansell. £80.
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The *Index of English Literary Manuscripts* continues its stately progress, as awe-inspiring and as utilitarian as a draught elephant. The present volume (with a small "v") is the third to be published, following as it does Volume I, Parts 1 and 2, which appeared in 1980 and cover the years 1450-1625. Volume II will deal with writers between 1625 and 1700. Volume III those between 1700 and 1800, while two further Parts of Volume IV will carry the roll-call of nineteenth-century writers forward from H to W. To W. certainly, for even if we feel with Gladstone that "Hugo, hélas!" when asked to name the greatest French poet of that century, the fact remains that, in English, Wordsworth adorned fifty years of it.

In the earlier period there is a shortage of autograph manuscripts. In the nineteenth century a superfluity. As a result the compilers have abandoned the principle that authors treated of should be those found in the *Concise Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* and have confined themselves to a more restricted list. For the present volume their choice was Arnold, Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, the Brownings, Samuel Butler, Byron, Carlyle, Lewis Carroll, John Clare, Coleridge, Wilkie Collins, De Quincey, Dickens, Disraeli, Maria Edgeworth, George

Elint, Fitzgerald, Elizabeth Gaskell and Gissing. The bias, it will be seen, is in favour of imaginative literature and the big names. No Bagehot, no Beedoes, no Bridges, no Cobbett, no Conan Doyle and saddles of all no Borrow. Is he really less important than Maria Edgeworth? These must, however, be subjective judgments, and discussion would be as fruitless as it would be entertaining. The general principle is, on the other hand, worthy of debate. One of the best sections in the work is that devoted to Byron, and this is, as the compilers readily admit, because Professor J. J. McGann most generously put the working papers for his new edition at their disposal. This act of generosity, however, makes the Byron section of the *Index* redundant. It is the lesser authors, lacking a modern complete edition, whose manuscripts are hard to trace. The fate of Borrow's manuscripts has been shockingly obscured by the villainous T. J. Wise who not only broke manuscripts up - that of *Wild Wales* is distributed in random fashion among at least thirteen collections - but even cut them into small squares in order to lend a spurious "association value" to the printed volumes into which the pathetic fragments were inserted.

The scope of the *Index* is not restricted to manuscripts and typescripts, but includes corrected proofs, diaries, notebooks and marginalia. The compilers drew on published sources and wrote to some 400 repositories and private collectors (private owners are only named with their permission, but may be approached through the publishers, though in these hard times it might be unwise to expect this facility to be available for ever). This was followed up by visits in France and the British Isles, and by correspondence, the ordering of copies, the engagement of

research assistants and a limited number of visits in the USA - and, we presume, perhaps excepting the visits in Australia and New Zealand too, and even elsewhere. Auctioneers' and booksellers' catalogues were not taken into account except for Sotheby's between 1960 and 1978, for which years *American Book Prices Current* was also searched. This is a pity since catalogue descriptions may serve to distinguish between manuscripts of the same work, clues as to location may be gleaned and important manuscripts are sometimes illustrated, thus affording for unlocated items some record of their text.

It will be evident that the *Index* can only be as good as the information supplied to it, and the fact that the compilers were unable to visit each repository and inspect each item ought to inspire caution. It is not the fault of smaller institutions and private collectors if they lack the breadth of expertise that would enable them confidently to identify every item in their care. Nevertheless misattributions and misidentifications exist if not abound. It is to be hoped that the *Index* will not make scholars lazy, and that they will realize that it can only be, and indeed only claims to be, a point of departure.

If the *Index* is used by editors and cataloguers alone it is redundant, for they dare not take the information it gives as gospel, and must do the work again for themselves. There is still, however, a gulf between literary and textual critics. The former too often seek to expound an author's works with no better equipment than the printed page, perhaps in an edition that ought to be superseded. They deny themselves the privilege of watching a work of art grow on the page as the author drafts, revises, adds and

deletes, with all that that has to reveal about his state of mind and his intentions. Nor is it only the text that a manuscript preserves. Authors scribble in the margins. Manuscripts sometimes bear lines or fragments from other works, with all that that implies for dating and the understanding of the author's sources. If the *Index* inspires a return to the original texts its value will be incalculable.

The manner in which the information contained in the *Index* is presented follows that used for Volume I, and while elegant (it is reproduced from cards) seems on the whole sensible and practical. Two points have struck me, however, while making use of the *Index*. First, where several manuscripts of a particular work are known the title is not repeated, and this, combined with the lack of typographical guidance consequent upon the method of reproduction, makes a particular manuscript of a particular work frustratingly slow to find. Second, each manuscript of each work is allotted its own number in the form, for instance, of "CoS 769" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge "Trochaeus"). I have noticed that scholars have begun to use these numbers for brevity's sake in correspondence, and I believe that the creation of a whole new series of reference numbers for manuscripts is pregnant with confusion. Manuscripts of Sir Walter Raleigh, for instance, given the prefix RaW followed by a number are going to be confused with Rawlinson manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, among which, indeed, there are manuscripts of Raleigh. Furthermore, the problem of interfilling new discoveries will continue to arise. The method adopted is that of the *STC*, whereby the first entry to be interpolated is given the number of the preceding entry with the

suffix ".5", the next two that number with the suffixes ".3" or ".2" according to their chronological position, and so on. The *Index*, however, is dealing only for new titles but also for new manuscripts of old titles. Moreover, the *Index* goes into further detail than new manuscripts of either class may well be numerous.

How well has the *Index* succeeded in its own standards? The general consensus seems to be that it is useful, but not infallible, and indeed the compilers would claim no more. The better is the enemy of the good, and someone who is brave enough to put an Aunt Sally for his colleagues to get at performs a more meritorious action than one who fiddles obsessively with his research and like as not takes his discoveries with him to the grave as far as this reviewer was concerned. The traditional hunt for nits to pick is unrewarded, and comparison of the relevant parts of the *Index* with the copy for his catalogue of T. J. Wise Ashley Manuscripts was very much in the credit of the *Index*. The editors' contributions of the compilers and the Advisory Board are both concealed from public knowledge, whatever these may have been like the groups are to be congratulated on this, given all the difficulties, a remarkably comprehensive and accurate compilation.

The *Cumulative Dickens Checklist 1970-1979*, compiled by Alan M. Cole and K. K. Collins (391pp. Trow, Whitston. \$30. 0 87875 230 7) bring together a decade's queries, checklists from the *Dickens Studies Newsletter*. Over three thousand entries are fully recorded, with name and subject indexes that make it a compilation a convenient guide to recent research and criticism.

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FEBRUARY 11 1983

Ancient History 125-26	International Affairs 137-38
Anthropology 136	Ireland 127
British History 128	Law 124
Commentary 132-33	Literature 129, 139-40
Fiction 130-31	Philosophy 123
	Poetry 141-42

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

ALEICHEM, SHOLON	Morienbnd [Monty Haltrecht]
ALEXANDER, G. M.	<i>The Prelude to the Triman Doctrine: British Policy in Greece 1944-1947</i> [David Hunt]
AVERY, GILLIAN	<i>Onlookers</i> [Lewis Jones]
BAMFORD, JAMES	<i>The Puzzle Palace: A Report on America's most secret agency</i> [Walter Laqueur]
BESLEY, PATRICK	<i>Room 40: British Naval Intelligence 1914-18</i> [Walter Laqueur]
BERNARD, LOUISE	<i>Abel</i> [Walter Laqueur]
BETJEMAN, JOHN	<i>Uncollected Poems</i> [Richard Brain]
BOWMAN, JOHN	<i>De Vinter and the Ulster Question 1917-1973</i> [D. W. Harkness]
BRAMBLE, FORDS	<i>Fools</i> [J. K. L. Walker]
BUCKLEY, ROGER	<i>Occupation Diplomacy: Britain, the United States and Japan 1945-1952</i> [Christopher Thorne]
CANNY, NICHOLAS	<i>The Upside Eari: A study of the social and mental world of Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork, 1666-1643</i> [Kevin Sharpe]
CHEEVER, SUSAN	<i>The Cage</i> [Brian Morton]
CHENKIN, KIRILL	<i>Okhnik verkh nogami</i> [Walter Laqueur]
CLIFFORD, JAMES	<i>Person and Myth: Maurice Lezhard in the Melanesian World</i> [Peter Gathorne]
DE STE CROIX, G. E. M.	<i>The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World</i> [Peter Green]
ECKHART, MAX	<i>The Ladies' Man</i> [Andrew Hisslop]
ELLIOTT, MARIANNE	<i>Principles in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France</i> [R. B. McDowell]
FURBER, HANS RUDOLF	<i>Splionage gegen die Schweiz</i> [Walter Laqueur]
FUSSELL, PAUL	<i>The Boy Scout Handbook and Other Observations</i> [Zachary Lender]
GARDAM, JANE	<i>The Pangs of Love and Other Stories</i> [Anne Ditchene]
GRISON, ODOFREY	<i>The Cornish Dancer and Other Poems</i> [Peter Scupham]
GRISON, ODOFREY	<i>Blessings, Kicks and Curses: A Critical Collection. Collected Poems, 1963-1980. The Private Art: A Poetry Notebook</i> [Greville Lindop]
HART, H. L. A.	<i>Essays on Bentham</i> [William Twining]
HOLROYD, MICHAEL (Editor)	<i>Essays by Divers Hands: Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature XLII</i> [David Trotter]
HOO, WILLIAM	<i>Mole</i> [Walter Laqueur]
KRIPKE, SAUL A.	<i>Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language</i> [P. F. Strawson]
LINTOTT, ANDREW	<i>Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City</i> [Peter Green]
MCGINLEY, PATRICK	<i>Goosefoot</i> [Patricia Craig]
PECK, LINDA LEVY	<i>Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I</i> [J. A. Guy]
PLUNKETT, HORACE	<i>Ireland in the New Century</i> [Florence G'Donoghue]
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Opera	<i>Mozart: The Magic Flute</i> (Dominion Theatre) [Alan Hollinghurst]
Television	<i>Shakespeare Lives: The Queen of Spades</i> (London Coliseum) [April FitzLyon]
Theatre	<i>DAVID HARRIS: A Map of the World</i> (Lyttelton Theatre) [John Hope Mason]
A policy for literature?	Robert Hewison
Author, Author	
Two letters from Cambridge to Mrs Montagu	Andor Gomme
Poems by Connie Bensusan, D. J. Enright and Gavin Ewart	
Paperbacks in brief	
Among this week's contributors	
Information, please	
Letters on History of Parliament, Professing Literature, The Asiatic Mode of Production	

PHILOSOPHY

SAUL A. KRIPKE
Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language
145pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £9.50.
0 631 13077 2

Saul Kripke has thought uncommonly hard about the central argument of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* and produced an uncommonly clear and vivid account of that argument - as it struck him. The last phrase is important to Kripke. He does not claim that his version of the argument is in every respect faithful to Wittgenstein's intentions; the latter are perhaps not sufficiently definite to be rendered precisely. Still less does he wish to be taken to be expressing his own views: these "are by no means always in agreement with Wittgenstein's". Both as expositor and as philosopher Kripke thus advises, at the outset, a statesmanlike caution.

It is natural to suppose that when we use a word or symbol of our language, we are guided in its use by our grasp of its meaning, or of the rules or instructions for its use which we have mastered; that these are what tell us what is correct to use the expression in such-and-such a way; to apply it to this case (if it is a descriptive term) or to compute with it in this way (if it is a mathematical symbol). So we appear to invoke some fact about our mental life to explain our confidence in the correctness of our current use of the expression. But if we take this conception seriously, it seems that there can be no guarantee that what we now take ourselves to mean by the expression is the same as what we meant by it in the past. For our past practice is consistent with our having meant by it something quite different.

Kripke illustrates the point with a mathematical example; but he remarks, justly, that it should be obvious to any reader of Nelson Goodman: perhaps by "green" in the past I meant grue (where anything green seen before now and anything blue seen from now on is grue).

The conclusion is not, of course, that we must at any moment be uncertain as to whether what I now mean by an expression is the same as what I meant by it in the past. The conclusion is that the very conception invoked in the argument, natural as it seems, is not to be taken seriously. It is illusory. There

was (and is) no such thing as the postulated mental fact or item, denoted by the phrase "my having meant in the past (or my meaning now) such-and-such by a given expression", which was supposed to have the crucial property of instructing me how it was (or is) correct for me to use that expression.

Kripke confesses to an "eerie feeling" as he contemplates this conclusion. "It seems as if the entire idea of meaning vanishes into thin air." He asks whether it is possible to escape the sceptical conclusion by seeking an acceptable candidate for the role of mental fact or item which will constitute my meaning such-and-such by an expression. He considers at length one popular answer, viz. that in learning the expression we acquire a disposition to use it in a certain way. In a sense, as we shall see, this is right; but it can be dismissed as an answer to the immediate problem, for it ignores the requirement on any such proposed fact or item that it must have a normative role, must have the character of an instruction or rule, justifying a particular use as correct.

The idea of an introspectible special experience of meaning such-and-such by a given expression, though not treated with contempt either by Wittgenstein or by Kripke - for neither is behaviouristically inclined - is similarly found inadequate: no such experience could determine its own interpretation; none "could leave the consequences of meaning".

Finally, an appeal to Platonic or Fregean abstract entities, e.g. senses, does not help; for the problem relates, not to the abstract entities themselves, but precisely to the question how any mental state could constitute a "grasp" of any particular sense rather than another.

So much for the problem. What of the solution? Well, first we must abandon the chimerical, if natural, notion of the language-user being guided by the mental fact - his meaning such-and-such by an expression - in the light of which he judges his application of it in a particular case to be justified or correct. Rather, we must acknowledge that after a period of instruction in the use of an expression "training" is the term beloved by Wittgensteinians, though his military or circus-animal associations may induce some uneasiness, the learner simply comes to find it "utterly natural" to use

the expression in a certain way, does so "as a matter of course". So far, this seems to echo the rejected dispositional account. But matters cannot be left there; for, of course, the bare fact that someone finds it utterly natural to proceed in a certain way is no guarantee that he is proceeding in the right way. If we advert only to the way the learner or speaker finds it natural to use the expression, the notion of correct use seems to be left out of account altogether. Or, worse, if we try to bring it in by identifying "correct use" with "use the finds it natural for make", we are abolishing the distinction between "correct" and "seems to him correct"; and that is tantamount to destroying the notion of correctness altogether, depriving us of the right to speak of correctness.

And now the way lies open to the full solution. There must indeed be a place for the idea of correct use. And there is such a place. There is such a place because language is essentially a social phenomenon. We are not dealing - indeed the whole argument implies that we could not be dealing - with individual language-users considered in isolation. We are dealing with communities of language-users. And the test of correctness of use of an expression is the test of conformity - or failure of conformity - with the use of the expression in a given community. Evidently, for this to be a test, in the case of expressions applicable to what happens in nature, there must be shared or sharable access to circumstances in which members of the speech-community agree, and can be observed to agree. In the application of the expression; i.e. there must be publicly observable bases for the application of such expressions. It is these which Wittgenstein calls "criteria". Hence the famous doctrine that expressions for inner processes stand in need of outer criteria. Private-language argument about inner processes and outer criteria, sensation-language etc. is, then, to be seen as a consequence, an application, of the more general considerations to the effect that grasp of meanings, following a meaning-rule etc. is a matter of conformity to an agreed common practice, a matter of sharing, as Wittgenstein puts it, in a common "form of life".

Similar considerations will apply, on this view, where what is in question is not a matter of empirical application of an expression to objects or events in

the natural world, but a matter of computation or calculation, of what follows logically from what of what is recognized as a demonstrative proof and so on. Here again there is rough general agreement in practice, readiness to agree on what is a mistake etc. or, in general, a shared form of life; and anyone who shares in this form of life, who has acquired in these respects the same dispositions as other members of the speech-community, is said to have mastered the relevant concepts or operations.

The great point, on this view of the matter, is that there is, philosophically speaking, nothing behind all this, and no need for anything beyond or behind it all to constitute a philosophical explanation of it. That is not to say that there are no biological and anthropological or cultural-historical explanations of how speech-communities agreeing in common linguistic practices came about. Such explanations there may well be. But as far as the philosophical problem is concerned, the suggestion is that we can just rest with, or take as primitive, the great natural fact that we do form speech-communities, agree in linguistic practice and so on; that we have, if you will, a natural disposition to develop the dispositions which qualify us for the description, members of a speech-community, agreeing in a common linguistic practice. The great natural fact covers the phenomena. It is unnecessary, misleading and, as has been argued, paradox-generating to appeal to problematic mental states of "meaning something by an expression" to explain the phenomena. Rather, those very phrases which came into question at the outset - our grasp of a concept or a meaning, our mastery of rules for the use of an expression etc. - can now be harmlessly reinstated and understood in the unproblematic terms we have before us.

Thus, in summary, the argument of the main text of Kripke's book: an argument set out with all the clarity, lucidity and economy that one expects of its author. One conclusion, of an exegetical character, seems to be established beyond question: viz. that Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument, which has been the occasion, on the part of so many philosophical commentators, of so much perplexed or complacent discussion, is in essentials complete before that point in the *Investigations* is

reached at which it has been generally thought to begin.

On some other points, of varying degrees of importance, there may still seem to be room for doubts. (It should be remembered that Kripke has not excluded doubt in his own case.)

Philosophers often offer "analyses" of ordinary forms of assertion as corrections of the incoherent constructions which other philosophers, or less sophisticated persons in their more reflective moments, might suppose those assertions to bear. We may be inclined to construe Wittgenstein's solution to the sceptical problem about meaning as just such an analysis of ordinary forms of assertion concerning someone's meaning something by an expression, following a rule, having grasped a concept etc. Kripke indeed allows that Wittgenstein should be seen as specifying the conditions which legitimate or justify such assertions; but he distinguishes this sharply from specifying "truth-conditions" for such assertions: if truth-conditions alone could give them meaning, we should leave, he says, in accordance with the sceptical argument, to declare all such assertions meaningless.

This seems far from obvious. It gives one pause. Then one reads, "All that is needed to legitimize assertions that someone means something is that there be roughly specifiable circumstances under which they are legitimately assertible No supposition that 'facts correspond' to these assertions is needed." But isn't the "circumstance" that someone is using an expression in accordance with agreed common practice just such a fact?

Perhaps the feeling is that if we accepted the truth-conditions conception of analysis here, i.e. with regard to assertions about what people mean by expressions, we should also have in conclusion that the truth-condition of "2 + 2 = 4" is that people agree that this is so. But should we? The answer is: by no means clearly.

The question canvassed in the three preceding paragraphs is - primarily exegesis. There is room for more substantial doubts. I remarked earlier that appeal to the notion of abstract objects of thought - concepts, senses, universals, properties, (mathematical) functions - was dismissed as leaving the sceptical problem unquieted, or, at

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best, merely changing its form: the prudential would now be, how any mental state could constitute "grasping" of any particular sense rather than ungrasping, or, perhaps, how any mental state could constitute the firm association of a particular expression with a particular sense. This may be right, but it seems over-lusily to dismiss the notion of the abstract object of thought as altogether irrelevant; for it may seem to have a part to play in both of the two key notions in the Kripke-Wittgenstein picture of the matter of meaning: in (1) the notion of the speaker who has been adequately "trained" in the use of an expression finding it "utterly natural" to make certain applications of it, and in (2) the elucidation for justification of the notion of correctness of use or application in terms of common.

publicly observable agreement in linguistic practice. Consider these in turn. Certainly we normally apply, say, a descriptive general term or predicate to an observed natural object as a matter of course; but not for no reason at all. We call something "red" or "a car" because we see it as red or as a car. In Part II of the *Investigations* Wittgenstein has much to say, though in a limited context, of the experience of seeing as; and many of the phrases he there uses strongly suggest that the bare commonplace fact of perceptual recognition contains implicitly the thought of the abstract general thing, the concept or type or universal, as exemplified in the particular case.

Again, the notion that the criterion of correct use of an expression is to be found in observable agreement in

linguistic practice requires the possibility, and fact, of our recognizing that the same thing is being said in the same type of situation, i.e. requires the recognition of identity of type over differences of case; not only of situation-type, but of expression - or sentence-type. To deny the reality or possibility of such recognition would, on the theory's own terms, be to deny the existence of any justification or basis for saying that the use of an expression was correct; it would be to nullify the theory's own solution to the sceptical problem. But to admit it seems to be admitting that we work, and must work, with the idea of general types which are, or may be, exemplified again and again in different particular cases.

Does such an admission, if made, either diminish the force of the sceptical problem or impugn the

sceptical solution? It is not clear that either consequence follows. But the admission, if made, has its own importance: for it tends at least to diminish the degree of encouragement which acquiescence in the Wittgensteinian position might otherwise give to a species of reductive naturalism regarding thought in general. It is a noteworthy irony that the strictures of this species of reductionism are often felt most strongly by the most scrupulous thinkers.

The main text of Kripke's book occupies little more than a hundred pages. It is followed by a short "Postscript" entitled "Wittgenstein and Other Minds", dealing with a line of thought which antedates Wittgenstein's concern with the

sceptical problem about meaning which can be traced from the *Tractatus* through into the *Investigations* and beyond. The argument, beginning from the Lichenbergian (and Humean) insight that Descartes' right to his "I" moves swiftly to the sense of expressions for inner states such as pain, is internally connected with the outward and visible manifestations of those states. It is a relatively familiar argument, variants of which are to be found in other writings inspired by, or parallel to, Wittgenstein's; but nowhere has it been more clearly and compellingly presented than by Kripke. His Postscript and one, moreover, of his exposition and one, moreover, of his misconception that Wittgenstein's view is behaviouristic.

ANCIENT HISTORY

G. E. M. DE STE CROIX

The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests

712pp. Duckworth. £38 (paperback £15.95)

ANDREW LINTOTT

Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City
286pp. Croom Helm. £14.95.
0 859 16051

First, appropriately enough, some statistics. Geoffrey de Ste Croix's magnum opus, now published in paperback, contains over seven hundred closely printed pages, and weighs, in the hard-cover edition, more than three pounds. The notes alone run to some 107,000 words, and the total word-count is not far short of half a million. As a development of what began as three J. H. Gray lectures, this represents inflation on a truly monumental scale. At first sight only the appendices show restraint: four in thirty-three pages, where *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* had four in 109. Closer inspection, however, reveals other economies of the *Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* class room for little more than twenty pages on the archaic and classical periods, from Hesiod to Alexander the Great (though incidental allusions occur elsewhere); the rest is divided between the Hellenistic kingdoms and Roman Imperialism, with a bled-out preliminary excursus on "proper Marxist" definitions (not always Marx's) of class and the class struggle and cognate matters, plus a drawn-out coda describing the fall of the Roman Empire in terms of class-exploitation. The book comes bound in the appropriate liturgical colour ("red for the Feast of the Apostles and the Martyrs, who shed their blood for the Faith out of love for the Redeemer"), and adorned with a symbolic icon, Van Gogh's "The Potato Eaters", reproduced in the authentic sickly-green tones of want and despair.

Several of these features are instantly disturbing. At the risk of being relegated by Ste Croix to that stodge-chorus of bourgeois colleagues who (by his account) reacted to each successive phase of his work, circulated in draft, with shock, obtuseness and predictable capitalist cliché, I think it is important to ask ourselves why. The Van Gogh frontispiece is a good starting-point. "These", Ste Croix tells us, "are the voiceless toilers, the great majority... of the Greek and Roman world, and so on. In fact they are nothing of the sort, and Ste Croix's correlation between the ancient and modern worlds remains, at best, distinguished: Eating potatoes and drinking coffee (to get which, at affordable prices, they did some indirect exploitation of their own), these northern Dutch labourers, multinational victims of the Industrial Revolution, have little in common with the peasant of the Hellenistic chora, and even less with the *thes or zenghes* of Africa. The obvious question is why Ste Croix did not utilize a genuine icon from antiquity. His answer would doubtless be: because no suitable icon existed. In fact, since he includes the Roman Empire in his survey, Ste Croix had an ideal - indeed, unique - work to hand in the great agricultural mosaics from Chirchell (Caesarea) in North Africa, painted by Blanchi Bandinelli (himself a Marxist) for their "easy, realistic accuracy". The trouble, of course, is that not only are the workers working (rather than sitting about indoors as deprived consumers), but looking healthy, if not happy, clearly, an irrelevant icon that produces the correct emotional effect. The end justifies the means.

It is also symptomatic that in a book ostensibly sympathetic to the Greek peasant, Ste Croix repeatedly, and with justice, stresses the primacy of the agriculture in the ancient economy; so little effort should have been made to study the breed of first hand, *his* subject. But Polyviou clearly doubts whether acquitting a guilty man is the appropriate way of seeking to compel the police to obey this law in their search for evidence. Other remedies should surely be sought. The Chief Justice of the United States has suggested a civil right of action for damages to be given to the victim of unlawful search or seizure. And there is another possibility - effective disciplinary action independently administered.

Mr Polyviou's work is a notable contribution to our knowledge of a difficult and vitally important branch of the law. Those of us whose business is with the law will find it invaluable. The general reader, though he may find it hard going, will, if he persists, yield to its fascination and learn much about law and society.

and general significance. This is understandable, but it is a matter of regret. Many years of research by scholars from several disciplines will be necessary before the time will be ripe for a full-scale intellectual biography. Yet one wonders whether Hart, perhaps been over-cautious - at least until now - in not stepping back and taking a broader view of his subject.

Nevertheless, this is an important book. It contains an authoritative, extraordinarily patient interpretation of some key aspects of Bentham's thought. It is also a careful exploration of the relationship between our greatest contemporary legal philosopher, and his great predecessor, Hart epitomizes the deep ambivalence of most Bentham scholars towards their subject. Unlike students of Marx, Benthamites are not committed Benthamites. Hart is a modest utilitarian, an unrepentant positivist, and a disciple of Bentham who finds some of his main inspiration in what he sees as crucial and illuminating errors of his predecessor. In the best tradition of serious scholarship, this book adds significantly to our understanding of both the author and his subject.

a sustained critique of Bentham's jurisprudence and a spirited defence of some central aspects of Hart's own views.

The first four essays deal with matters of quite general interest. The last six are more specialized studies in legal jurisprudence, though at points where it overlaps with political and moral philosophy. Hart is careful to sketch the historical context of Bentham's concerns, but his approach is predominantly analytical. The main connecting thread of the book is an elucidation and critique of Bentham's treatment of some fundamental concepts: fictions, fallacies, natural rights, liberty, law (and a law), legal sovereignty and command. A central theme is that Bentham's impetive theory is distorted by his choice of some key concepts - in particular the notion of command - and that he attempts to escape from the resulting difficulties were largely unsuccessful. Yet the errors involved are sufficiently illuminating to constitute, in the words of J. L. Austin, "one form of philosophical genius". Hart's main conclusion is that Bentham's emphasis on the notion of command represents a

The right to privacy

Lord Scarman

POLYVIOS G. POLYVIU

Search and Seizure: Constitutional and Common Law
391pp. Duckworth. £35.
0 7156 1592 0

This book is more than a careful, scholarly work of legal research, though it is certainly that. It is a comparative study of contrasting developments in American and English law in that sensitive area where the need to enforce the criminal law comes into collision with the civilized requirement that the law must respect and protect the individual's human and property rights.

It is broadly true that the modern American and English law of civil rights is derived from the common law of England as it stood in the time of Blackstone. His *Commentaries on the Laws of England* were first published in 1765. His investigation of "the elements of the law and the grounds of our civil polity" made a deep impression on the very intelligent lawyers who after the Declaration of Independence set about the task of embodying the basic principles of the common law and the grounds of our civil polity in the American Constitution. The Bill of Rights introduced by way of amendment to the Constitution, was seen as the embodiment of those principles of the common law which the English parliamentarians and common lawyers had striven to secure from the Crown in the seventeenth century and which the American colonists were determined to protect as their birthright against the encroachment of royal authority in the eighteenth century.

The specific topic Polyviou G. Polyviou has chosen is "search and seizure", and his specific task is to analyse the differences which now exist between the respective approaches of

the modern American and English legal systems. He is a bold author. He criticizes judicial developments in both systems, exposes what he believes to be their weaknesses, and, prying in aid the case law of Scotland, Ireland, Canada and Australia, offers some constructive ideas for the improvement of the law. I am not sure whether he advocates reform by legislation or "improved" judicial decisions. He is quite hold enough to suggest either or both as the way forward.

Polyviou takes his title from the Fourth Amendment of the American Constitution, which reads as follows:

"The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

There is no doubt that this Amendment was intended to embody the safeguards of the common law. And the common law model for the amendment was the classic judgment of Lord Camden in *Entick v Carrington* (1765) 19 State Trials 1133.

Both systems of law, English and American, stem from this one root. Why then is the modern American law so different in certain important respects from the modern English law? The answer given by Polyviou is that the Americans elevated the right of people "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects" to the heights of constitutional principle. It was, however, only gradually that the American Supreme Court came to flex its muscles and feel its strength as the guardian and interpreter of the Constitution. Polyviou reminds us that for almost a century after its adoption the Fourth Amendment hardly ever came before the Supreme Court. But when it did, in the famous case of *Bruce v United States* 116 US 616 (1886), the

Court was very conscious of its role as the interpreter of the Constitution. It took hold of *Entick's* case, which was based on the law of trespass to person, property and goods, and transformed it so as to apply not merely to such "adventitious circumstances" as the breaking of doors and the rummaging of drawers but to "all invasions on the part of the government and its employees of the sanctity of a man's home and the privacies of life". In 1967 the Supreme Court adopted and developed this approach. Refusing to limit the protection of the Fourth Amendment to "physical intrusion" into a "constitutionally protected area", the Court declared that the amendment "protects people, not places".

Polyviou traces this significant development with great skill and contrasts it with the modern English law, where the judges have retained the physical character of the searches and seizures against which the law offers protection. In both systems the development of the law has been by judicial decision. The American judges have reached for the sky and developed a broad principle in tune with modern aspirations for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. But the English judges have shown themselves cautious, pragmatic, content to advance step by step, leaving Parliament to legislate. If it should think fit, for anything more ambitious. The difference is between judges who have the Constitution in their hands and judges who live to accept Parliament as sovereign. The American Supreme Court can invalidate legislative enactments as unconstitutional. English judges, under a constitutional duty to obey the legislative will of Parliament, they, Polyviou demonstrates, is the fundamental reason for the difference between the two systems of judgment.

He spells out this difference of approach with other examples, which

make fascinating reading. In particular, he shows how American courts accept the challenge of developing a broad principle to meet the problem posed by the need for stop-and-search methods to combat street crime. American judges have developed a case law which while recognizing the need for what they call "stop and frisk", seeks to limit it to situations where it is reasonable to suppose that it is necessary either as a safety precaution or for the prevention of crime. The English judges, although always prepared to support action necessary to preserve the public peace, have shown themselves reluctant to allow stop-and-search procedures unless authorized by statute.

Polyviou also explores the interesting and - I would think - valuable possibility that the judges, English as well as American, may develop a concept of lawful detention without the necessity of arrest. In England the concept already exists: for instance, in the Prevention of Terrorism legislation. If it were to be treated as a "seizure" and subjected to the safeguards common to both systems of law which are reflected in the Fourth Amendment, the individual could be afforded the necessary protection in a world in which it is sometimes vital in the war against crime for police officers to have the right to detain persons for interrogation without having to go to the lengths of arresting them.

The book ends with a valuable and interesting chapter headed "Concluding Comments". The author sees as the weakness of both American and English law their lack of an effective remedial response to the gathering of evidence by unlawful searches and seizures. Here the contrast between the two systems is stark and complete. Under American law, evidence obtained illegally is not admissible in criminal proceedings. The consequence is, as Chief Justice Burger has forcefully pointed out, that guilty men escape notwithstanding the existence of evidence of their guilt.

In English law, subject to certain safeguards in respect of admissions and confessions, all relevant evidence is admissible, whether legally or illegally obtained; but the judge retains discretion to exclude evidence, if he should think its reception would prejudice the chance of a fair trial. Polyviou does not like the English approach; nor can he stomach the consequences of the American approach. He believes that Australian courts may have found the way out of the difficulty by requiring the judge to admit evidence lawfully obtained only if the interest of justice outweighs the interest of protecting human and property rights of those who are subjected to the unlawful search and seizure.

Polyviou makes a strong case against the American principle. But I doubt whether the Australian rule is as good as that which has been accepted by English law. Under English law the judge has a discretion which is strictly judicial in character. He will not allow evidence to be admitted if it is obtained in his opinion that evidence would create an unacceptable risk to a fair trial.

But Polyviou clearly doubts whether acquitting a guilty man is the appropriate way of seeking to compel the police to obey this law in their search for evidence. Other remedies should surely be sought. The Chief Justice of the United States has suggested a civil right of action for damages to be given to the victim of unlawful search or seizure. And there is another possibility - effective disciplinary action independently administered.

Mr Polyviou's work is a notable contribution to our knowledge of a difficult and vitally important branch of the law. Those of us whose business is with the law will find it invaluable. The general reader, though he may find it hard going, will, if he persists, yield to its fascination and learn much about law and society.

Power to command

William Twining

H. L. A. HART

Essays on Bentham: Studies in Jurisprudence and Political Theory
272pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
£15 (paperback £4.95).

0 19 825348 6

Bentham studies have recently gathered momentum. Eight volumes of the *Collected Works* have been published and about a dozen more are due to appear in the next few years. Recent monographs by Balmüller, (Hume, Long and Steininger) may have the fore-runners of a flood of specialized works. A *Bentham Newsletter* has been established, conferences and seminars have been held and an international network of Bentham scholars has begun to emerge.

No one has contributed more to these developments than Herbert Hart. His inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1953 started both the revival of legal philosophy in England and the process of re-establishing Bentham as our leading jurist. With James Burns he

undertook the exhausting task of editing three key volumes in the *Collected Works* - *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, *Of Laws in General and A Comment on the Commentaries* and *A Fragment on Government*. The first of these has just been reissued in a paperback edition with a substantial introduction by Hart. It has been a conspicuously successful Chairman of the Bentham Committee and he is the most authoritative commentator on and critic of Bentham's jurisprudence.

Essays on Bentham brings together most, but not all, of Hart's work in this last role. It is much more than a convenient collection of already published essays. Five of the chapters are substantially unchanged versions of earlier publications, including the elegant "Chorley Lecture on 'The Mystification of the Law'", an engaging account of Bentham's shifts in attitudes towards the United States and an illuminating analysis of Bentham's ambivalence towards Beccaria. Four more chapters draw on, but go beyond, previously published material. The introduction and the last chapter are substantially new. The whole is skillfully integrated to present

a sustained critique of Bentham's jurisprudence and a spirited defence of some central aspects of Hart's own views.

The first four essays deal with matters of quite general interest. The last six are more specialized studies in legal jurisprudence, though at points where it overlaps with political and moral philosophy. Hart is careful to sketch the historical context of Bentham's concerns, but his approach is predominantly analytical. The main connecting thread of the book is an elucidation and critique of Bentham's treatment of some fundamental concepts: fictions, fallacies, natural rights, liberty, law (and a law), legal sovereignty and command. A central theme is that Bentham's impetive theory is distorted by his choice of some key concepts - in particular the notion of command - and that he attempts to escape from the resulting difficulties were largely unsuccessful. Yet the errors involved are sufficiently illuminating to constitute, in the words of J. L. Austin, "one form of philosophical genius". Hart's main conclusion is that Bentham's emphasis on the notion of command represents a

fatal flaw in his theory of law, yet buried in that idea is the notion of "a content-independent peremptory reason for action" which is a requisite for understanding legal authority and law-making.

Much of the ground covered in this book will be familiar to students of jurisprudence. However, the author takes the opportunity to restate and occasionally to modify his own position on a number of issues. He admits to a few second thoughts (for example, on pages 122 and 138), he makes some minor concessions to his critics, but he also forcefully defends his central views against Dworkin and others. Hart writes with his usual elegance and clarity, but this is not an easy book. It provides ample support for the claim that careful elucidation of important concepts can throw light on much else besides. It provides one more refutation of the notion that this kind of approach is trivial or sterile or narrow-minded. But it does make considerable demands on both the patience and the intelligence of the reader. The focus is largely limited to particular topics, without any attempt of a comprehensive overview of Bentham's intellectual development

Downtreading the demos

Peter Green

use whatsoever is made of the rich comparative material assembled in recent years by Mediterranean anthropologists: Peter Walcott's *Greek Peasants, Ancient and Modern* (1970) is conspicuously absent from Ste Croix's vast bibliography, along with the related work of scholars such as Campbell, Friedl, Sanders and Peristiany. The continuous emphasis on theory (Ste Croix is contemptuous of scholars who do not work from a prior model) leads to an unexpected and even to the deployment of specific literary sources in which area, it must be said, this book exhibits a truly formidable breadth and expertise. Worse, the suspicion arises that Ste Croix's offhand treatment of the three most vital centuries in Greek history is dictated not so much by a shortage of evidence - Andrew Lintott's scrupulously documented *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City* would alone suffice to disprove such a claim - as by the obstinate refusal of the material to demonstrate Ste Croix's general thesis of class-exploitation. Like the Fast Boy in Dickens, he wants to make out (bourgeois) flesh creep, and for this purpose the habits of Ptolemies, or, a fortiori, Roman provincial administrators, are more to the point than the stubborn, outspoken and ultimately self-defeating egalitarianism of the post-Periclean Athenian Assembly. Even so, an account of the Greek class struggle which devotes no more than a short paragraph to the Thirty Tyrants glosses over Thucydides' lethal account of *stasis* on Corcyra and makes no reference at all (among other interesting omissions) to Melos, Hesiod's fable of the Hawk and the Nightingale, or that fascinating if unsavoury right-wing intellectual *Altru*, Critias, might be thought, to say the least, something more than ideologically lopsided.

To find possible ideological motivation for what might otherwise seem mere perverse eccentricity, we need to take a very careful look in the first instance at Ste Croix's definitions and application of those elusive concepts "class" and "class struggle". Normally he is not at all shy about second-guessing, or improving, either accepted Marxist or, indeed, traditional Christian tenets. In both cases he displays an arrogant confidence - indeed with the caveats of mock-humility - that his version of the Founder's creed comes closer to the Ur-truth than the institutionalized and corrupt public dogma which ousted it. (I suspect that few things would annoy him more than being accused of anti-Christianity: his own version of Christ seems to be, as one might expect, almost midway between Brecht's and Pier Paolo Pasolini's.) Other critics have noted his avoidance of many Russian, East German and Italian Marxist sources. I suspect an implicit judgment here on his part. On the other hand, perversely, he hampers his definition of "class struggle" almost past belief by a determination to reconcile it with the opening sentence of *The Communist Manifesto*. Hedging carefully (for reasons that will emerge below) he writes at one point: "A class (a particular class) is a group of persons in a community identified by their position in the whole system of social production, defined as 'all appropriators of labour (and the surplus that it produced), but also, at least till well on in the fifth century BC, and possibly longer, the slave population. Their chief aim moreover, was not, as Lintott observes, 'to improve the conditions for selling their labour but to avoid that kind of labour altogether', so that we are faced with the paradox of a state which, far from evolving towards the subjection of its producing class, instead used democratization as a weapon for freeing that class from its would-be exploiters."

Where, then, was the class struggle? Small wonder that Ur and Thompson chose to retroject a group of hard-fisted proto-industrialists into this pre-industrial situation - the only way (as they saw it) - in which orthodox Marxism could extrapolate a class conflict, from such recalcitrant material. Ste Croix, who has far greater respect for awkward facts, salvages what he can from the mess by simply arguing, without stressing comparative figures, that the fundamental class phenomenon represented only a small percentage of the total turnover in archaic Greece; that in certain circumstances the free producers could be indirectly exploited themselves; and that there fore, though Greek and Roman civilization was not technically a slave economy, he would now "mise en scène" the whole of ancient history as a struggle for the expression of this "fundamental class phenomenon". At this point non-ideologues may find their patience wearing a little thin.

The whole concept of slavery, indeed, raises thorny and controversial issues that can hardly fail to embarrass any orthodox Marxist. Whether "orthodox" is an apt label for Ste Croix I rather doubt (though I'm quite sure he would think so, having a nice knack for treating all Marxists who disagree with him as mere misguided heretics); but the embarrassment is palpable. Discussing the short supply of free hired labour, and the availability of cheap slaves, he asserts: "I do believe that slavery increased the surplus in the hands of the propertied class to an extent which could not otherwise have been achieved and was therefore an essential precondition [italics mine] of the magnificent achievement of Classical civilisation." This is tendentious to a degree: it galls its affect, not only by treating a minority as a monopoly, but by carefully fudging a crucial time-sequence. The expansion of slavery at the expense of free labour was an undoubted fact (Solon's reforms being the original factor that set the long-term process in motion), but its full impact was not felt until the Periclean age was over, and that age's achievement fixed for all hence classic, conceptual holdall. While Marx's concept of the class struggle was (as Ste Croix admits in his

for him (as for Marx) a fundamental constituent element in all transactions involving the employment of labour, rather than a frequent incidental attribute of such transactions - did he, I wonder, regard himself as exploited by New College during his teaching career there? - he is committed to this covering, throughout the ancient world, not only exploitation *tout court*, which would be easy enough, but class exploitation, quite another matter.

To complicate the situation still further, though no one would doubt Marx's preoccupation with the class struggle (in an 1884 letter to Engels he described it as the thing into which "the movement of the whole *Weltanschauung* is resolved"), he never formally defined it, while in his crucial *Preface to a Critique of Political Economy* (1858-59) he did no more than glance at the problem of class, and made no reference at all (because of Prussian censorship, it has been argued) to the class struggle. Nothing, I think, Ste Croix has done to his own definition, reassuring us that if Marx had produced one himself, it would have been "not very different from the one I have given". (No danger, if the militant theorists are right, of Marx's ghost rising from Highgate Cemetery to correct him, though some of us might have relished the exchange.) As Bernard Knox says, there is something very odd about the metaphysical use of the term "class struggle" being used for (in Ste Croix's own words) "situations in which there may be no explicit common awareness of class on either side, no specifically political struggle at all, and perhaps even little consciousness of struggle of any kind". Some Marxists, as Ste Croix well knows, insist on class-consciousness and active political conflict as essential ingredients in any definition (a view with which I have some sympathy). But to do this, he argues, "makes nonsense not merely of *The Communist Manifesto* but of the greater part of Marx's work". Consideration, which as a Knox admirer I observe, "will have more force in some quarters than in others".

It also (perhaps more seriously) puts severe limitations on anyone attempting to interpret the ancient world in Marxist terms. Both Ste Croix and Lintott correctly dismiss as moonshine earlier attempts by Ur and Wason, or a favoured Stalinist such as George Thomson, to posit a powerful *hierarchia* of merchant-princes, *Kaufmanns-aristokratie* between the old nobility and the demos. (Ste Croix's notion of Solon and Plato treading only to pay for their tourism goes, perhaps, too far in the other direction.) What they do not ask themselves is why such a theory should have arisen in the first place. The truth of the matter is that in a class struggle it takes two to tangle; and the kind of *stasis* for which evidence exists in archaic Greece has proved singularly resistant to Marxist analysis. There was no labour market in the modern sense; indeed, as Lintott observes, there was not even "a separate sector of economic activity, in which men could confront one another as employers and employees". The free poor - smallholders, as a class, outnumbered by far not only those landed aristocrats who would qualify, in Marxist terms, as appropriators of labour (and the surplus that it produced), but also, at least till well on in the fifth century BC, and possibly longer, the slave population. Their chief aim moreover, was not, as Lintott observes, "to improve the conditions for selling their labour but to avoid that kind of labour altogether", so that we are faced with the paradox of a state which, far from evolving towards the subjection of its producing class, instead used democratization as a weapon for freeing that class from its would-be exploiters.

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February Books

Fiction

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more candid moments) largely defined by, and thus limited to, modern industrial society, exploitation of one kind or another, has been going on since the dawn of history, and can, with a little ingenuity, be adapted to almost any theoretical model. The trouble remains that the Greek, and in particular the Athenian, polis was so intractably different from all other Near East systems, even from the earlier Minoan or Mycenaean palace economies, all of which operated along lines far more congenial to any Marxist exploitation-spotter. Here, as Ellen and Neal Wood have stressed in their *Class Ideology and Ancient Political Theory* (1978), the state was essentially "a means of organising and extracting labour from largely dependent labouring populations, a means of maintaining a fundamental division between producers and appropriators, an instrument for the exploitation of the former by the latter". Similar conditions were to recur in the great Successor Kingdoms of the Hellenistic Age: the pattern of administrative exploitation was taken over and developed still further by Rome.

It should by now be tolerably clear why Sie Croix devotes the bulk of his book to these later periods, analysing with skill and (it seems to me) a certain angry ideological relish, just how the Greek propertied classes combined with their Macedonian and Roman overlords to stamp out the last sparks of true Greek democracy – a fortunate participation from the dogmatist's viewpoint, since it enables Sie Croix to treat as *class-exploitation* what might otherwise appear as simple colonial imperialism exercised over a subject race, rather akin to the Spartan exploitation of Messenia.

The road of the true party-liner through ancient Greek civilization is beset with innumerable pitfalls. To his credit, Sie Croix tries to come to terms with most of them, though in the process he increases his own vulnerability. Honesty will keep breaking through the dogma, and the ideological restrictions he forces himself to accept give him the air of a fighter with one hand strapped behind his back, while the other jabs away heroically at all comers. Take the relation of the individual to the means of production as a decisive factor in defining his class. Sie Croix has to describe this, despite its antecedents, about twenty pages later we see why, when he admits that it would involve our treating the slaves of the Greek world, "absurdly, as belonging to the same class as free hired workers and even many poor free artisans and landless peasants". His old bottles, even when refurnished, cannot always contain the heady new wine he wants to put in them.

Here, of course, Lintott, who has no detectable ideological preconceptions, and a healthily pragmatic attitude to evidence, stands at a great advantage: the reader who wants to supplement Sie Croix's brief analysis in many ways, unsatisfactory account of the chaotic and classical periods could not ask, on the whole, for a more sensible or less tendentious survey. Lintott has his quirks (eg, a conviction that the Solonian crisis arose from "debt viewed as a legal deficit" rather than a general dependence of the poor on the rich); but he is alert to the crucial tensions between old tribal and new civic thinking that furnished the classical polis with its dialectic, and realizes that "from about 500 onwards it was war between cities which was the greatest stimulus to fighting inside cities", an element of city-state *stasis* that Sie Croix almost wholly ignores. To *stasis* as such Lintott rightly assigns a central position in Greek political development, granting (as did Aristotle) the tensions created by fundamental inequalities between rich and poor, giving due – but not exclusive – weight to aristocratic factionalism, and concluding, convincingly, that genuine class conflict was comparatively rare. Nevertheless, he contrives to dig out some nice early instances ignored by Sie Croix (Crotone, Cumae, Syracuse, the complete with land-redistribution and cancellation of debts, tensions which, as he says, "appear more commonly as bogeys in the writings of philosophers and orators than in fact").

Sie Croix's commitment, wherever possible, to explaining classical Greece, Athens above all, in terms of a landed elite appropriating the labour and surplus of the exploited unfree

makes it hard, at times, to understand what was really going on. Here, again, Lintott is far clearer. Even Sie Croix has to admit that, for a while at least, political vigilance by the *demoi* held up the inexorable march of economic necessity (though he then tries to have it both ways by asserting that Marx was no economic determinist). Paradoxically, he makes less than he might of the Solonian confrontation, rightly described by Lintott as "the earliest evidence of class conflict between citizens in Greek history". But then the main result of Solon's reforms was to give free agricultural producers (who constituted, then, the bulk of Attica's population) extra protection and doubt against their former oppressors. At least from Cleisthenes' time all adult free males,

it would not, as Lintott says, "shed tears over losing Athenian overlordship". Why should it? Autarky, as an ideal, was not the monopoly of the major powers.

Of course Athens had its oligarchs, its elitists, its snobbery and class prejudices (of a peculiarly virulent and pervasive kind, as careful study of Aristophanes, Plato and Aristotle makes clear). But two points are worth noting in this connection. First, Athenian reformers showed a skill amounting to genius for producing political egalitarianism in the citizen body while leaving the old social structure virtually intact: you gave the garlic-breathing rabble the vote, but you did not invite it home to dinner, much less introduce it to your

free", I do not feel competent to discuss. The thesis he presents is as convincing as it is depressing, being argued with meticulous scholarship and a stunning mass of apt, and often unfamiliar, illustrative material. The seeds of this corruption had been sown early, by an intellectual minority influential out of all proportion to its size. Whereas in Pericles' day the *pragmatists* (do-nothings) and *idioti* (individualists) had earned nothing but public contempt, from Euripides onwards, as the hold of the polis on its members loosened, self-interest and solipsism took increasing toll of engaged democratic loyalties. The citizen now preferred to cultivate, not merely his garden, but also his soul and his capital reserves. Political impotence bred a taste for money-making and social

Macedon. Sie Croix finds Aristotle "closer to Marx than any other ancient thinker I know", which is not far from the truth. He was little concerned with the forces of production, most of all slaves as producers; though admitting inequality of property as a cause of such conditions, he did not see the prime impulse to revolution made a democracy as, in Lintott's words, "the insolence of demagogues" – "infringing the nobility". His basic distinction between acquisitions or fact made as an argument in favour of old-fashioned aristocratic agriculture. It was Marx who changed it, to a conceptual weapon to mark capitalism and to provide a theoretical basis for the idea of an exploitative society. Nothing, in the end, hampers Sie Croix so much as his ideology.

This is a great pity, since it draws much of what still remains, in so many ways, a superb and – dare one say? – Stakhanovite achievement. In scholars could match Sie Croix's familiarity with so wide a range of *testimonia* and modern scholarship, perhaps none could organize this mass of material with such sure control, or offer so many brilliant, lucid insights into vexed historical problems. Yet the great historian in Sie Croix is constantly being elbowed aside by a quibbling theologian, sometimes with regrettable effects on his logical judgment. In particular, his code seems to run rampant over any iniquities of exploiters, whether Greek or Roman. Thus he will, legitimately, query the figures given for Mithridates' slaughter of Romans during his "age of the long knives" in 88 BC, but not unquestioningly the (no less inflated) numbers associated with L. Aemilius Paullus's mass killing of Epigoni and Bellerophon's pogrom after the Illyrian Riot; while he is so anxious to believe the rhetorical horror-story about P. Vedius Pollio ordering slaves thrown into his fish-pond to be devoured by ravenous lampreys, that he has to do his homework on lampreys as such, which though modest blood-suckers do not, alas, possess jaws. On the other hand, he seems ready to excuse Athens' fifth-century imperial deprivations by the delightful argument that Rome did the same thing on a far larger scale, which reminds me of the housewife's apology for her illegitimate boy: "Please, mum, it was only a very small one."

When modern parallels are a question, we hear about Hanoi and Dresden, but not a word in Cambodia or the Gulf Arabidges. Professor Badian has paid Sie Croix the compliment of describing his "boiling rage with indignantly to man". But for the things which really raise Sie Croix's blood-pressure is *odium theologicum* at a high theoretical level, and would be far more inclined to believe in a real concern for man's inhumanity to man if he were a little less selective in picking examples of it. (I suppose it is a kind way of describing his years' work that organized Christianity has ever had) (amusing to find Sie Croix, however briefly, in Sir Karl Popper's camp). On the other hand, Marx eulogized Aristotle. In particular the Aristotle of the *Politics*, as Sie Croix must, overlook him, too, forgetting the awkward fact that the *maestro di coloro che sanno* was at least as anti-banual as Plato, and no less capable of justifying authoritarian rule, in his case monarchy, with one sedulous eye to his (presumably exploitative) employer, Philip of Macedonia.

Still, his business is the class struggle, and he must just that down where best he can. By far his finest achievement in this massive, and massively discursive, work is the grim analysis he offers, at length, of the reversion to authoritarian plutocracy that followed the collapse of city-state freedom; the progressive betrayal of Greek democracy by the ever more hand-in-glove with Macedonia and, subsequently, Roman imperialists. (His explanation for the fall of the Roman empire, through a "most intense and ultimately destructive economic exploitation of the great work done in the last few years,



One side of a vintage mosaic at Cherchell (Caesarea) in Algeria, dating from the late fourth or early fifth century: from a figure lying the corpse of a sheep, which is being cut up in preparation for a banquet – though the huge dog helps himself; reproduced from *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa* by Katherine M. D. Dunbabin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978, 0 19 83217 4).

daughter. Foreign ancestry, or a mental occupation (eg, Euripides' mother supposedly selling vegetables in the market) were always good for a sneering laugh. As both Lintott and Sie Croix are well aware, a whole range of class-slanted terminology exists in Greek, semantic word-clusters correlating, on the one hand, the wealthy, noble, handsome, virtuous and intelligent; on the other, the poor, stupid, ugly, worthless and criminal. The attitudes in each cluster seem to have been virtually interchangeable.

The second point is the remarkable degree to which, despite such prejudices, the Athenian *demoi* prevailed against subversive efforts by the *ultras* not only in the fifth century but well towards the end of the fourth. If the "propertyless classes" had been united in a determination to exploit the citizen body, they had their chance in 411, and again in 404. Both attempts failed ignominiously, and after a very short time, through internal dissension and a strong, determined, democratic opposition. Though encroachment by the propertied began almost immediately thereafter – protection of the wealthy was (as indeed it has been for Solon) a corner-stone of the restored democracy, and the oath included a refusal to countenance *dokimoi* or land-redistribution – there were still no really significant episodes of class conflict to Athens till the Lamian War that followed (322) Alexander's death. It is a heartening record against odds, and I wish Sie Croix had made more of it.

The real exploitation in the Athenian democracy was carried out, in effect, by the *demoi* as a whole, irrespective of class, at the expense of foreign slave-labour and the subject-allies of the Peloponnesian (thiasocracy). Sie Croix, in a famous article (1950), argued, wrongly as I believe, that the supposed resentment of the subject-allies at this slavery (*doublet*) was a myth invented by wicked oligarchs (1956, of course, was to show just what a latter-day subject-allies felt about supposedly democratic imperialism). While a democratic state might not back secession from Athens if that involved loss of *demokratia* nevertheless if it felt it could break away and keep its political constitution

landless or not, were citizens. This, as the Woods stress, "gave the labouring class a freedom and power that it had never possessed before and in many respects has never regained since". Democratic elitism was the name of the game. Did you work for a living, and, if so, at an employer's beck and call (the ultimate degradation), or did you command the labour of others? Ample evidence shows that this last was the ideal, not of a privileged few, but of the entire citizen body, rich and poor alike.

It follows that Athenian imperialism came as no accident: it was built into post-Cleisthenic (and, *a fortiori*, post-Persian Wars) Athens as an ultimate inevitability. Someone, somewhere, outside the charmed circle had to foot the bill for Athenian autarky. Some animals were indeed to become more equal than others. Just as Sparta's "Eguals" (*homoiotai*) were sustained by the self-labour of the Messenians and Helots, so – as the Old Oligarch so clearly saw – the cities of the empire supported the Athenian *demoi* in the state to which, by the time of the Peloponnesian ascendancy, it had become accustomed. Democratization, by protecting free labour, had meant *inter alia*, the increased acquisition of slaves, by war or purchase – non-Greek barbarians, hence fair game – as a source of manpower. Nevertheless, free producers continued to work their own farms (a tough job, as is clear from Xenophon), and in the matter of employment, resident alien and citizen stood on an equal footing.

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A second edition of *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies* by Richard Duncan-Jones has recently been published (433pp. Cambridge University Press, £25, 0 521 24970 8). It is divided into three parts: "Wealth and its sources", "Price and price-levels" and "Population and demographic policy", and covers such diverse topics as the prices of wines, grapes and olives; the net yield on vines implied by Catullus's figures; and the use of prices in the novels of Petronius and Apuleius. A part from correcting some minor errors, the author has in this new edition added an appendix on Roman weights and measures, and a section of supplementary notes which take account of work done in the last few years.

The permanence of partition

D. W. Harkness

JOHN BOWMAN

De Valera and the Ulster Question 1917-1973
369pp. Oxford University Press: Clarendon Press, £17.50, 0 19 82681 0

It is one of contemporary Ireland's misfortunes that the real inhabitants of the island do not conform to the idealized nationality of traditional republicanism. This is made more poignant by the knowledge that as early as 1910, before a succession of twentieth-century events substantiated it, the island of Ireland simply did not co-exist. In the last analysis the test of nationality is the will of the people.

Even de Valera, the central character of John Bowman's excellent book, could occasionally glimpse the truth. In 1921 he was able to assure Dail Eireann that Ulster Unionists were "devotedly attached to the Empire" as Irish Nationalists "were to independence" and that the former would "fight for one as much as they would do for the other"; and in 1939 he could recognize that Unionists were "a temperamental different state". But as Dr Bowman so convincingly shows, such flashes of insight were rare, and throughout his long political career,

measure he enacted in the Republic consolidated the Republic as a separate state and consolidated Partition.

Dr Bowman shows just how difficult it was to pursue the all-island, one-nation myth while at the same time shaping what was a nearer approximation to the Irish nation in a smaller territory. He demonstrates that extreme statements were needed to contain more impatient republicans, but that in practice de Valera was more moderate, more pragmatic, more humane than his own legend allows; that his refusal to contemplate force, his recognition of the right, first of some Unionists, then of the six counties, to devolved government (from Dublin), his refusal to allow Fianna Fail to organize in Northern Ireland or elected northern nationalists to sit in Dail Eireann required courage and caused him to lose his own ranks. Thanks to Bowman this side of de Valera will be recognized as well as the republican "heresies" and undoubted inconsistencies of his long career.

The contradiction of "cherishing all the people equally" while at the same time raising to dominance the ethos of the Catholic majority was to be exposed fully in the 1937 Eire constitution, wildly inappropriate for the thirty-two counties of its aspiration. Conflicting purposes surface elsewhere in such examples as the inability to lift self-imposed trade barriers in 1936, the refusal of a powerful unity offer in 1940 (which Bowman elucidates as never before) and in the silences and the commitments on church-state relations before and after the election of 1951.

Meanwhile there were twenty-six counties to be governed, with republican extremists to be outflanked. Here de Valera found the Green card of "nationality" the ace of trumps. But the more successfully he developed his independent, Gaelic, republican and Catholic territory, the more effectively he made the Orange card to the excluded north. As his *Irish Times* obituary was to conclude in 1976: "Almost everything he did, every

Eamon de Valera, the "chief Republican" as Unionists saw him, was peculiarly blind to the strength of Unionist separatism. Vainly he sought to achieve a polity out of tune with their existence. His goal was "a free, self-contained, united Gaelic Ireland", as the 1934 Fianna Fail convention put it, or "an Irish-speaking, autarkic, neutral, independent, united Ireland" in Bowman's own words. It was to be Catholic in ethos too, and one must wonder what attraction it could have offered to a million Protestant British Unionists in Ulster.

If de Valera's aim was clear, his methods varied. Force, contemplated early, was soon abandoned as impractical, even counter-productive; federation was offered; economic coercion tried; the attraction of twenty-six county perfection contemplated. The higher Catholic birth-rate in the north and the conversion of Unionists to nationalism were looked to, and even a population swap was mooted. The Ulster Unionist was deemed both "Irish" and "not Irish" as policy varied; and world opinion and Westminster politicians in turn were vainly urged to rectify the imagined injustice.

Meanwhile there were twenty-six counties to be governed, with republican extremists to be outflanked. Here de Valera found the Green card of "nationality" the ace of trumps. But the more successfully he developed his independent, Gaelic, republican and Catholic territory, the more effectively he made the Orange card to the excluded north. As his *Irish Times* obituary was to conclude in 1976: "Almost everything he did, every

measure he enacted in the Republic consolidated the Republic as a separate state and consolidated Partition.

Dr Bowman shows just how difficult it was to pursue the all-island, one-nation myth while at the same time shaping what was a nearer approximation to the Irish nation in a smaller territory. He demonstrates that extreme statements were needed to contain more impatient republicans, but that in practice de Valera was more moderate, more pragmatic, more humane than his own legend allows; that his refusal to contemplate force, his recognition of the right, first of some Unionists, then of the six counties, to devolved government (from Dublin), his refusal to allow Fianna Fail to organize in Northern Ireland or elected northern nationalists to sit in Dail Eireann required courage and caused him to lose his own ranks. Thanks to Bowman this side of de Valera will be recognized as well as the republican "heresies" and undoubted inconsistencies of his long career.

The contradiction of "cherishing all the people equally" while at the same time raising to dominance the ethos of the Catholic majority was to be exposed fully in the 1937 Eire constitution, wildly inappropriate for the thirty-two counties of its aspiration. Conflicting purposes surface elsewhere in such examples as the inability to lift self-imposed trade barriers in 1936, the refusal of a powerful unity offer in 1940 (which Bowman elucidates as never before) and in the silences and the commitments on church-state relations before and after the election of 1951.

After World War Two, de Valera badgered a bothered world with his grievances only to discover that the European powers, for example, "believed that our problems were very small indeed". These problems remain relatively so today, however much local perspective is distorted and no matter how deadly serious they may be on the north's "narrow ground". That they exist at all is in part because de Valera failed to define openly the nationality that he rightly identified as the key to independent Ireland's politics. Bowman does not make the same mistake. Like D. G. Boyce in his recent study *Nationalism in Ireland*, he draws widely on the learned literature, historical, geographical, sociological, to confirm Fr Flanagan's observation that nationality must rest on a shared will to stand together. Irish nationalism, Bowman notes, was preoccupied with a "fictitious geographical predestination"; it did "little to develop a political culture capable of uniting the population of the entire island". De Valera's vision, he implies, was so narrow as virtually to exclude the bulk of Ulster.

Not that de Valera lacked advice. In 1922 Erskine Childers urged him "to get to know, understand and tolerate" the point of view of the northern majority "by co-operation in every way possible"; but at the end of his life de Valera confessed that "he had been so absorbed in building up the South after Independence that he had failed to follow this advice". So it is that a million northerners continue to express a common purpose not to identify with the Irish republic. Why should they?

Dr Elliott also traces the careers of the many less distinguished exiles who struggled to keep alive on small French government allowances, by obtaining military commissions or by finding jobs in civilian life.

Dr Elliott makes clear that in dealing with France the United Irishmen had to cope with two problems. To begin with, they had to convince the French government that their movement was nationwide, strong and well organized. The nationalists considerable space to the growth of militant radicalism, drawing on the vast amount of material to be found in government archives in Dublin and London, composed largely of communications from informants. But while this material indicates great activity, recruiting, fund-raising, planning and talk, the total effect is somewhat phantasmagorical. It is impossible for the modern historian to distinguish between vague adherence and complete commitment, and the French were continuously trying to gauge the military value of what was undoubtedly a large, popular protest movement. The other problem was an awkward conflict of interest between the Irish radicals and the French. The former were well aware that the French as liberators might prove exacting,

Bowman's scholarly research, lucid style and thoughtful arrangement leave little room for misunderstanding the real issues or failing to identify the priorities, the achievements, the confusions and the failures of modern Ireland's leading statesman. De Valera emerges the more credible from such a "wide and all" analysis, and if his self-deception and myopia were not confined to the north it is now clear that they were must pronounced in this quarter. But will the message be learned by those still prepared to kill and to die in the pursuit of the same outdated nationalism, confused by the same anachronistic rhetoric? Their goal, whether they know it or not, still requires the British northerner to give up his Britishness if he is to keep his home; or else to quit the island. (Repetition? A cause, if ever there was one, for the Member for South Down)

The Unionist still asks why should he do either. Cannot Irish nationalism, now more than ever exposed to its limitations, more easily accept definition in terms of human not physical geography? Justice, of course, requires a re-drawn border. This implies the recognition by Dublin and London of the permanence of partition and of their respective responsibilities to concentrate on the building of their own polities in these islands. These are painful truths. Maybe wider changes in the embrace of international structures, and the further recognition that today's major problems are no longer amenable to solutions proffered by mere nation states – will help to make them acceptable. So too will Dr Bowman's rigorous analysis.

It was important therefore that the Irish nationalists should achieve a considerable degree of success in the field by their own efforts, so that there would be no danger of France becoming the predominant partner in this alliance. But it could also be argued that to launch an insurrection without the prospect of speedy aid from France would be highly reckless. Timing was to be a bedevil planning.

Dr Elliott emphasizes that the United Irishmen have been a source of continuing inspiration to later Irish nationalist movements – not least because they failed. "The myth of noble failure" exercised considerable influence in Ireland as in Scotland, where William Wallace and Menzies are revered, and of course in classical antiquity. After all, historical failure can never be seen as corrigible by power. But the unfortunate thing about a moral victory is that it is a victory with a very different outlook. This was certainly to be the fate of the eighteenth-century Irish radicals. Men of the Enlightenment, they were later to be regarded as the founding fathers of a romantic nationalism deeply rooted in Irish Catholicism.

Plunkett) but it also attracted much hostility – one Irish Nationalist paper called it a "prolonged libel on the Irish people". Plunkett, however, had worked with and knew priests and people; and his references show that he was aware of the need to choose between "preserving a discreet silence and speaking my full mind". It remains an agreeable book, with comments on nationalism that have an enduring validity and much information on the history of co-operation.

Trevor West, who represents Trinity College, Dublin, in the Irish Senate and is writing a biography of Plunkett, has contributed an interesting foreword analysing Plunkett's part in Irish history and the reception his book received. He is right in speaking of a "remarkable" book by a "most stimulating" thinker who compared himself to a dog on a temple court – an equal nuisance to both sides.

The Anglophobe alliance

R. B. McDowell

MARIANNE ELLIOTT

Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France
411pp. Yale University Press, £15, 0 380 02770 2

Irish Jacobites and Irish Jacobins in successive centuries looked to France for support. They received encouragement and military assistance; assistance which was too little and arrived too late. At the close of the eighteenth century the Irish radicals, the United Irishmen, felt they had particularly strong claims on France. By what seemed a fortunate chronological coincidence, shortly after the fall of the Bastille, the United Irishmen, ardent, middle-class, liberal idealists, devoted to liberty and equality, started a great campaign for radical reform, founding discussion clubs, producing a considerable amount of well-written propaganda, mobilizing popular feeling and ultimately transforming a network of political debating societies into a large military force, armed with at least, pikes, and theoretically composed of units well organized on a territorial basis.

One of the ancient régime's legacies to revolutionary France was a deep-seated hostility to Great Britain and a determination to weaken or destroy the British Empire. Since Irish radicals attributed most of Ireland's ills to the aggressive British connection, a strong negative force united radical Ireland and revolutionary France: Anglophobia. In November 1792, the Convention offered assistance to all patriots struggling to be free, an offer soon taken up by Irish radicals. Contact with French agents and from early in 1793 a procession of embassies claiming to represent the United Irishmen began to arrive in France. They argued that the British-dominated Irish administration could be easily overturned by a radical revolution, a French expeditionary force would acquire a base from which the British west coast could be menaced, and with Ireland independent Great Britain would be deprived of food supplies and recruits for its army and navy.

The Irish representatives in France were, Dr Elliott shows, petulant and self-righteous; ideally suited to the role. Tone certainly was petulant –

Marianne Elliott, using the vast documentary collection built up by the French bureaucracy, which throughout the tumultuous revolutionary epoch preserved its respect for despatches, memoranda and correspondence, has studied in close and fascinating detail relations between the Irish radicals and the French government. Her account is largely a study in historical futility, and since failure is an important element in history, it certainly merits attention. Irish revolutionaries and French officials had a common end – the defeat of Great Britain – but when they continuously ran into difficulties, they endeavoured to co-operate. Under the Directory, the drive, ardent enthusiasm and bold improvisation which characterized the heroic days of the revolution, still persisted. But there was also intense departmental jealousy, inter-service conflict and considerable ignorance both of Irish conditions and of the problems associated with naval warfare. It is scarcely necessary to add that Ireland had to be fitted into a continental strategy, French attention being continually distracted from the Channel and the Atlantic to the Eastern frontier and the Mediterranean.

It was perhaps unfortunate for Irish radicals that they won an early success in persuading Carnot, who was casting round for a plan which would break British resistance, to sanction a large-scale expedition aimed at Ireland. At the close of 1796, the British fleet, evading the blockade, got out into the Atlantic and it seemed for a moment as if the British army might have lost the war in a fortnight. But, though the expedition made a landing, it failed to achieve a landing and the consequent a sour sense of failure clung to the project of a thrust towards Ireland. However, there remained a few well-placed advocates to French official circles of an Irish expedition, and well into the Napoleonic epoch an invasion of Ireland was intermittently considered. But in the critical summer of 1798 when the United Irishmen rose in revolt, French resources had already been committed to a Mediterranean campaign and very little could be spared to keep resistance alive in Ireland.

The Irish representatives in France were, Dr Elliott shows, petulant and self-righteous; ideally suited to the role. Tone certainly was petulant –

and courageous but as time went on he became more and more committed to his career as a French army officer (as a young man he had dreamed of a commission in the British army). Lewis, trained as an attorney, was stiff and pedantic, and ultimately became a French educational administrator; T. A. Emmet, an able lawyer, soon after his arrival in France developed an intense dislike of Bonapartism; Napper Tany, a successful municipal politician with a flair for self-advertisement, tended to render anything he was connected with ridiculous by his rodomontades. The most conspicuous of the exiles was Arthur O'Connor, who combined the self-confidence of a landed gentleman who claimed descent from a great Gaelic family with the arrogance of a self-conscious left-wing intellectual. O'Connor's belief that he was the obvious leader of the Irishmen in France accentuated the dissensions which inevitably broke out among the exiled United Irishmen. Granted military rank, he was probably the only Napoleonic General who never saw action and he spent his latter years in writing what he believed would prove a seminal work on social development. Published in 1848, a good year for political speculation, it fell flat. Dr

Nuisance value

Florence O'Donoghue

HORACE PLUNKETT

Ireland in the New Century
340pp. Blackrock: Irish Academic Press, £7.50.

Horace Curzon Plunkett (1854-1932), son of the Irish peer Lord Dunsany, was driven by lung trouble to the Rocky Mountains in Wyoming, where he was a rancher for two years until his return to Ireland in 1889. His great work as a gloomer of agricultural cooperation then started. For many years he was a moderate Unionist MP for South Co. Dublin. He worked with high-minded Irishmen like Father Flanagan SJ and Lord Dunsany to

improve the living and working standards of the farmers, and when the Irish Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction was created in 1899 he was appointed its first head. President Theodore Roosevelt, was echolog Plunkett in his use of the slogan, "Better farming, better business, better living". Plunkett was chairman of the Irish Convention set up by Lloyd George in 1917 in an attempt to bring Unionists and Nationalists together to solve the Home Rule problem. He became a Free State Senator, and, like other members of the new Irish legislature, had his home burnt down by the IRA during the 1920s.

Ireland in the New Century was first published in 1904 and dedicated to the historian W. B. H. Lecky, whose bleak views of some aspects of Irish character Plunkett shared. The book was rightly praised for its style (which pleased

PLUNKETT

Rewarding usefully

J. A. Guy

LINDA LEVY PECK

Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I
277pp. Allen and Unwin. £18.50.
0 04 942177 8

The reign of James I is under scrutiny again. For too long this king has been the victim of literary pastiche, deployed as a foil to the fleeting glory of the overrated Elizabeth I. And within that traditional drama, Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, plays villain. Leader of a consistently reactionary faction, Northampton epitomized corruption, favoured Catholic Spain, thwarted reform, and deliberately wrecked the Parliament of 1614 – so the story goes.

Linda Peck has re-examined the documents, and her task is to rehabilitate Northampton. She sometimes overstates her case, but the overall picture is convincing. Northampton's career is also harassed to provide an insider's view of Jacobean politics and methods (though no wider analysis of the Court is attempted, despite the book's title), and this survey, too, is valuable.

Northampton was not corrupt by contemporary standards, and he did not advance Spanish interests to the prejudice of English ones. As an administrator he was conscientious, hard-working and constructive – hardly brilliant, but an essential prop of Salisbury's system, whatever personal differences existed between them. He backed Salisbury in the Privy Council and Star Chamber, and painstakingly attended to details of royal finance, the investigation of projects, and the management of Parliament in England and Ireland. He supported the Great Contract despite private doubts; he introduced Cranfield into government service. Yet we should not get carried away: when he assumed command of the Privy Council on Salisbury's death, Northampton exasperated James by his failure to provide swift, incisive advice on major policy issues, a weakness compounded by feebly attempts to shift the blame.

Northampton stressed the need for service in exchange for reward, even voicing merit as a touchstone of promotion. As Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Privy Seal and a Norfolk magnate, he spun a network of patronage that emulated Tudor patterns. He saw that the baronage had political as well as fiscal utility; it deployed to cement Court-Country relations. But how extensive was Northampton's patronage? Here Dr Peck is in difficulty, because her sources do not permit systematic analysis of the influence of privy councillors over royal patronage. James's bounty in England, as in Scotland, was increasingly administered by intermediaries. This toll against a monarch incapable of handling the conflicting claims of suitors or courtiers, until Northampton's function as broker was clarified, we cannot adequately evaluate his role as a courtier. Peck does, however, establish that Northampton, who remained a private Catholic, did not attempt to influence ecclesiastical appointments.

The Jacobean dilemma was that while court patronage was the key to the control of administration, it was also the inexorable motor of corruption. Northampton wielded reform as the means to maintain stability, tackling corruption in the navy, the horrids of office and in the system of purveyance. He probed the Irish revenues, and advanced the Earl Marshall's court. His goals were enhanced efficiency, accountability, improved services and the curtailment of unnecessary offices and fees. He opposed projects oppressive to the subject, believing that financial reform should balance the interests of Crown, subjects and contractors. His reforming zeal was genuine; it was not "spite" or a cloak for ambition. Yet Northampton failed as a reformer. Despite having Cranfield and Sir Robert Cotton in his private "think-tank", he lacked the vision and grip on events – and probably the influence of Court – to confound vested interests. He had his

own profit to consider, too. For instance, his starch patent yielded £15,750 in six years (mostly massive compensation for its abolition). If Northampton ever wanted to reform the British starch industry, his motives were scarcely altruistic.

His role in Parliament was to sit on innumerable committees and monitor private bills on behalf of Salisbury and the Privy Council. He also served as a principal Crown spokesman and manager, addressing union with Scotland, merchant grievances and early stages of the Great Contract. Willing to consult and even conciliate, Northampton was eager to prepare sessions so that both members and the Crown could secure their ends – the redress of grievances and solid and responsible, though his rhetoric was obtuse. Above all, he did not conspire to wreck the Addled Parliament. He disagreed with, and had already lost power to, Suffolk and Somerset. He did not attend this Parliament or its committees. Moreover, James had moved towards dissolution before Hoskyns's speech on June 3. Northampton had resisted calling Parliament; but he repudiated the undertakings. But the Addled Parliament collapsed because of discord between the Houses ever impetuous, and because James dissolved it falling immediate supply.

Factions and patron-client-relationships were fluid at the Jacobean Court – there was no automatic impulse. Northampton's career illustrates this neatly, but it also opens Pandora's box, because it implicitly denies that an authoritative view of James's reign will spring from the factional politics of the day, rather than from the king's own beliefs.

Surveying complacently

C. S. L. Davies

SIR THOMAS SMITH

De Republica Anglorum
Edited by Mary Dowar
162pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50
0 521 24109 X

Sir Thomas Smith's career – small farmer's son to Secretary of State – is one of the success stories of Tudor politics. Cambridge undergraduate at thirteen, Regius Professor of Civil Law at twenty-six, Vice-Chancellor at thirty, he left academic life for the service of Protector Somerset, becoming clerk to the Privy Council, then, briefly, Secretary of State in 1549. After several years in the political wilderness, he was ambassador to France 1562-66 and 1571-72, and Secretary of State once more from 1572 to 1576. He wrote the *De Republica* during his first embassy, ostensibly, at least, for the edification of the bilingual foreigner. Posthumously published in 1583, it ran through several editions by 1640, and was translated into Dutch in 1673, and German in 1688. In modern times it has been an indispensable source for anthologies of Elizabethan life.

While Smith had firsthand experience of some of the murkier aspects of Tudor politics (he stuck by Somerset just a little too long during the coup of 1549 and spent four months in the Tower), anybody expecting an insider's account would be disappointed. No Tudor politician would have dreamed of titillating the "rascal multitude" with the inside story, and the *De Republica* is even less enlightening about political realities than Horbort Morrison's *Government and Parliament*. Smith was an disquisition on etymology and an excursion into ancient history (he was, after all, the author of a treatise on the wages of a Roman foot-soldier). Fortunately he abandoned his initial attempt to fit Aristotelian institutions into the taxonomy of Aristotle's *Politics*; not, however, until he has taken us in

Falling James's resolve, his privy councillors had to balance the merits of reform against those of batten down the royal prerogative in return for income. Salisbury and Northampton agreed that the Great Contract's demise formed a landmark: the recourse would be to the prerogative and fiscal feudalism. (Elsewhere ordered his advisers to transcribe Edmund Dudley's notebooks in the wake of the Addled Parliament.) But Northampton perceived that the Great Contract had always been inadequate. administration were becoming inseluble, certainly by courtiers. Tudor stability had bred instability through structural decay. Yet if Elizabeth I had done things by halves, James I did virtually nothing.

We do not wait to the rehabilitated Northampton, who had trampled on Lord Cobham and Sir Walter Raleigh, and engineered the scandalous Essex divorce. He even turned his religion to advantage, for as a Catholic who compromised his faith in order to hold office, part of his value to James was precisely his willingness to forward any government cause, albeit against papal authority or English Catholics. Compared to Northampton, Salisbury was more innovative, Cranfield more systematic. Hard work alone could not bring success, especially when it failed to spot the consequences of the Cosyns project – Thomas Cromwell, to whom Peck refers in her closing pages, had consigned a similar proposal to instant oblivion.

Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, remains pompous, heavy-footed, dangerous and baroque. By contrast Linda Peck's study is meticulous, subtle, informative and elegantly proportioned. She has made a splendid historiographical debut.

Aristotelian fashion through the origins of the household and of the state.

The description of English institutions in Book Two begins respectfully, not with the monarch, but with Parliament: "the most high and absolute power of the realm of England, is in the Parliament." This is not, as Mary Dewar hastens to point out, a prophetic affirmation of the power of the two houses against the Crown. Parliament includes the Crown, and the initiative in the body of the monarch remained decisively in the hand. But Smith's assertion is a striking one. He is firm in arguing that the "consent" of Parliament is necessary for law, and that England is thereby distinguished from an absolute monarchy. So King John's surrender of sovereignty to the Pope was "forthwith and ever sithens taken for nothing," because it was "neither approved of by people, nor accorded by act of parliament." Smith is valuable on Parliamentary procedure, though no doubt much too bland about what really happened. Revealingly, there is nothing at all about elections, except for the well-known but question-begging aphorism that "even Englishmen are entitled to be there present, either in person or by procurator," and so, "the consent of the Parliament is taken to be ever mans consent".

Most of the book is taken up with a description of the workings of the law-courts. Smith never attended an Inn of Court, though both as JP and statesman he had considerable experience of the practicalities of the law. Disappointingly, he does not produce the systematic comparison of English and Roman Law which could have been expected of a Regius Professor. Nor, in 1565, is there much sign of that critical acumen which his had shown in writing the *Discourse of the Common Weal* in 1549. The major issues are blandly ignored. No one would guess from his brief description of the action to be taken when one of the parties to a suit does not appear, that this was a common failing: a main reason why cases took so long to reach resolution. If they ever did. Smith can maintain the straight face that "the rich hath no more advantage therein than the poor", and, most notoriously,

Climbing hopefully

Kevin Sharpe

NICHOLAS CANNY

The Upstart Earl: A study of the social and mental world of Richard Boyle, first Earl of Cork, 1566-1643
211pp. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50
0 521 24416 1

Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, was the most famous and successful of the English adventurers in Ireland in the early seventeenth century. From obscure and humble origins, he left England in his early twenties in 1583 to seek his fortune in Ireland. Through exploitation of his office as deputy escheator of crown lands, and a fair measure of sharp practice, he acquired a substantial estate. Subsequently, the pains he took to strengthen his title and to improve his rents brought Boyle a massive income – by the 1630s over £20,000 per annum. With land and wealth came recognition and title: in 1620 the Earl of Cork. But fame and success also attracted envy and enmity. To his detractors Boyle typified the parvenu, hoisted above his station to a sham honour built on the ill-gotten gains of a career spent cozening Church and Crown.

Nicholas Canny argues convincingly that in evaluating Boyle historians have too uncritically followed the slanders of his enemies, most notably Sir Thomas Wentworth. Drawing on Boyle's own papers, Canny sets out to comprehend not to condemn his subject, to understand, that is, how Boyle perceived his own position and the role of the New English in Ireland. Canny eschews straightforward biography to examine, in a series of

categorically deny the use of torture in England.

Reading between the lines, one discovers a rather less complacent Smith. He does admit the existence of "bustle-headed and lovers of trouble" who "gain by process, and waxe fatter by the expense of and trouble of other". He presents the arguments against the English practice of wardship strongly (some might think it "contrary to nature, that a Freeman and Gentleman should be bought and sold like a horse or an ox"), countering only with an explanation based on obsolete military needs. And he does, without naming names, allude to the case "not in the reign of the Queen now" (in fact the reign of the Queen Mary) in which a jury which returned a not-guilty verdict in a treason trial was imprisoned and swingingly fined.

Smith's work, uncritical as it may be, is an indispensable guide to the workings of the Tudor legal system, and also a source for establishment attitudes. Mary Dewar produced an excellent life of Smith in 1964. Her new edition of the *De Republica* replaces Leonard Alston's of 1906. Alston's was based on the posthumous printed version of 1583; though he noted major variations in the two manuscripts then known. Four more complete manuscripts were available to Dr Dewar, and she has worked from them to reconstruct the probable text of Smith's own missing 1565 manuscript; update the 1583 printing did little to update the matter of the text, and sometimes mutilated Smith's sense. The restoration is welcome. Dr Dewar has also unravelled an old puzzle: the relationship between Smith's text and that of his Essex neighbour William Harrison, whose "Of degrees of People in the Commonwealth of England" is nearly identical with chapters 17-24 of Smith's first book. Smith and Harrison read each other in manuscript in apparently friendly co-operation. It is appropriate that they both contributed to the celebrated definition of the English gentleman: "Whosoever... will beare the port charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be reputed for a Gentleman". "As for gentlemen, they be made good choise in England", is Smith's.

essays, aspects of Boyle's world. The fullest and best of these deal with his social ambitions and his family life.

In the best chapter, we see the full success Boyle epitomized: the sense of inadequacy felt by the English Achievements in Ireland he valued perhaps, only in as far as they fostered his ultimate social advancement in England. If Boyle became Lord Treasurer and continued to pursue the road to office and recognition at home. With skillful use of the evidence, Canny captures the man who achieved and ambition of the man who achieved his manners, often in contradiction to his private inclination, to the English taste. But the quest for length and hazardous. Boyle lacked pedigree, kin and a patron among the Old English in the colony; he had no broker at the English court; his eventual success (appointment to the English Privy Council) in 1640 was the principal investment – of his sons and daughters in carefully arranged marriages.

As a father Boyle was authoritarian and patriarchal. He expected and secured obedience and respect. While taking pains for the education of his sons he appeared to have treated his daughters as marketable commodities to be contracted at an early age for the most beneficial return. Yet for the study of the Earl of Cork's papers not, as Canny makes clear, bear out his model of the early modern patriarchal family advanced recently. Boyle was remembered affectionately by his children and clearly cared for them as individuals. (How could anyone believe that there was a period in history when, as a rule, parents did not?) Nor was his a nuclear family; grandparents and, in his later life, the older married children with their offspring lived within the Boyle household. Canny valuably questions over-simplified generalizations about family history. He argues, salubly, "the need for further studies of particular family experiences before we seek to draw any final conclusions about general trends of pattern".

Less satisfactory are the brief essays on Boyle's place in and perception of the Anglo-Irish colonial experiment. Canny makes exciting suggestions, but with the years of passage in Ireland, his adoption of a more Irish culture, his desire that his son learn Irish and his vision of the future civilization and development of the colony point to the potential emergence of a hybrid Anglo-Irish society. But the suggestions are not sufficiently pursued, nor are the various essays co-ordinated adequately to draw a map of Boyle's world or a world-view. It is a pity to exclude discussion of his business interests and the building of his estate – the principal matter of his papers – and especially unfortunate given the Terence Ranger's earlier remarks remains largely unpublished.

Amidst tantalizingly allusive pointers, some important questions remain unanswered. Boyle's papers, we are told, reveal that for all his necessary adherence to the Church of Rome, his "well-concealed sympathies lay with parliament and the puritans". But his "latent" puritanism and parliamentarianism do not emerge in these pages. Dr Dewar's glowing involvement with Irish culture reflects a desire for integration or assimilation – frustrated ambition? Was what is (somewhat loftily) depicted as Boyle's "spiritualized Machiavellianism" more than the justified self-interest? Perhaps these questions were never clear in Boyle's own mind; he very doubts and ambiguities may have been at the heart of the Anglo-Irish experience. If so, it would have been helpful had Canny brought them together in a conclusion.

With Canny as our guide, we are left up the steep ascent and along the rocky trails of Boyle's Anglo-Irish career, but the landscape as a whole remains unfamiliar and the portrait himself somewhat elusive. We are made good choice in England", is Smith's.

An empiricist's encounter

Zachary Leader

PAUL FUSSELL

The Boy Scout Handbook and Other Observations
288pp. Oxford University Press.
£8.95
0 19 503102 4

"The only review I am anxious about," confesses Virginia Woolf, "is the one in the *Times Literary Supplement*: not that it will be the most intelligent, but it will be the most read and I can't bear people to see me doomed in public." Paul Fussell, who quotes this journal entry in his immensely enjoyable new collection of "essays and reviews and bagatelles" (some of which were in fact first published in the *TLS*) is unlikely to worry about adverse notices. "The one I am obliged to be an author. Every author is, in a sense, a reviewer," he remarks of his special collection mostly of reviews, even if all of them "have been reconsidered and rewritten". Second, what a review actually says is deemed less important than its length and location (often determined by an editor). Fussell quotes Johnson: "Fame is a shuttlecock. If it be struck at only one end of the room, it will soon fall to the ground. To keep it up it must be struck at both ends."

Fussell's fame derives principally from the profound and affecting *The Great War and Modern Memory*, and *Abroad – the two most recent of his six earlier books*. Many of the virtues of these books are to be found in his reviews, but reviews can only get or go so far. After a while one comes to anticipate his tricks and ticks, and the level at which they argue and explore. This collection gives real pleasure, but it shows the limitations of its form. It also makes Fussell's point about authors as show-offs.

The book's thirty-four articles are divided into five sections: "Americana" (including the title essay, a defence of the Boy Scout ethos as revealed in its 1979 *Handbook*), "Hazards of Literature", "Going Places", "Britons, Largely Eccentric", and "Versions of the Second World War", topics which clearly grow out of or feed interests in Fussell's earlier books on prosody, rhetoric and satire, and the life of writing (as in *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Writing*), as well as travel and war. Fussell's method is that of a common-sense empiricist, as he forthrightly declares in the book's Preface: "I stand by the English empiricist school," he quotes Herbert Read approvingly: "I feel their spirit in my very bones and everything new will for me be a development of that great tradition."

Hence Fussell's grounds for admiring William Carlos Williams, in whose writings he finds "successful encounters with the American local concrete". Or his disapproval of a strain in Whitman which is "at once vague, portentous, solemn, and pulchre". In the witty "Notes on Class" he relies "not on interviews, questionnaires, or any kind of quantitative technique, but on perhaps a more trustworthy method – perception". This "method" can, on occasion, slide into complacency, as when Fussell says of Latin America that "for anyone experienced with Europe, it is boring" (for a Latin American experienced with Europe?). Usually, though, it is sensibly qualified. In "Where Are the War Poets?", for example, Fussell quotes a critic and poet who is something of a kindred spirit: "The best poetry of the war, the most truthful and penetrating, was rooted in the ground of physical experience." "With that literature," comments Fussell, "the conservative coalesces, and if the critic makes us feel a bit uneasy with a word like *truthful*, at least we sense that the guide is not going to know us with deconstructionist cant."

Fussell's essays are short and sharp with theory, they're rich in detailed observation and quotation. The assertion that Whitman "can make your flesh creep almost as often as Poe" is accompanied by a single perfect quotation: "What is removed

drops horribly in a pail." The essential vulgarity of another author, Harry Crosby's wife Caresse, is caught in the title of her memoirs: *The Passionate Years*. In "Notes on Class" Fussell singles out the words *equivocal*, *despicable*, and *patina* as "secret class indicators" or "culture words", the marks of the socially aspiring; while elsewhere in the essay he divides society into "those who think *prestigious* a class word and those who don't" ("classy", incidentally, a form of which Fussell later uses without irony, could serve a similar function). In a piece on Beswell, one of the book's "Britons, Largely Eccentric" (the others are Edward VII, Baron Corvo, Ivor Gurney, Rider Haggard, Somerset Maugham, and Evelyn Waugh), Fussell calls his subject "the sole inventor of the peculiarly contemporary exercise, 'the interview'", citing the following examples as typical: "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a newborn child with you, what would you do?" "Pray, sir, can you tell me why an apple is round and a pear pointed?" "When we were alone, I introduced the subject of death..."

Fussell's faith and interest in the objects of his perception – including people, places, things, books or "texts" ("a thing is literature if it's worth reading more than a couple of times for illumination or pleasure") – makes for the inclusion of as well as pleasing details. Though Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* is deemed a silly, pedantic, insignificant book, it is also shown to contain the occasional gem of meretricious common sense, as in the reminder that "an iambic foot cannot be illustrated by a word unless that word is part of a specific iambic line". In "Smul-Hunting in Pretoria", South African citizenship is revealed as richly stupid and illogical in its attitudes towards sex, but at the same time Fussell notes its prohibition of racist and antisemitic materials: "Items like the pamphlet *The Negro a Beast*, issued by the South African Anglo-Nerdy Union. The grossly anti-Semitic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*... *This Time the World and White Power*, by the late American Nazi George Lincoln Rockwell."

This fidelity to "fact" goes with a penchant for homely or down-to-earth

explanation. The recent vogue for comparative literary studies in the United States, for example, Fussell attributes to the Second World War, with its influx of "numerous brilliant young people adept in more than one European language". It is a vague bound to pass, since these now aging adepts are unlikely to be replaced, "barring another flux". In a later article, he explains why editors of literary journals and periodicals like printing letters of complaint: "they get a lot of signed copy without having to pay for it. The principle has been thoroughly mastered by the publishers of sex magazines like *Forum*..." To oke out their free copy further, editors often try to cajole the original reviewer into composing an "answer" to the complaint.

The last and best piece in the collection, entitled "My War", goes some way towards explaining Fussell's critical habits and predilections; it also makes one impatient for his next book, a study "of the behaviour of the imagination in the Second World War". "The war made me a foot-soldier for the rest of my life", says

lapse. One of them provides the subject of Robert Conquest's "What good came of it at last? An Inquest on Modernism". Conquest proposes to define Modernism in "an illustrative rather than a formal way". He means to include William Burroughs and novels in boxes as well as James Joyce, "soul-and-body alighting" as well as Ezra Pound, "striped rectangles" as well as Picasso and Kandinsky – not to mention "the revolutionary temperament" and the mysterious impulses which prompt the Tate Gallery to purchase "a pile of bricks" or Her Majesty's Government to offer knighthoods to anarchists and surrealists. Although still nurtured by English determinism and subsidized small magazines, Modernism is "dead, or nearly dead, in a live idling inspiring worthwhile work."

Sixteen years ago Frank Kermode covered more or less the same ground (minus bricks) in his essay on "The Modern". He explained the addition

to experiment which characterizes much twentieth-century art and writing as a term of apocalyptic fantasy. The idea of apocalypse enables us to begin to make sense of the addition, and of the variety of work it has produced. Conquest's account of Modernism is not informed by an equivalent idea; all that it illustrates, therefore, is the range and intensity of his own dislikes. "Modernism" becomes a term not of analysis but of abuse. As Rebecca West said of a critic who (in 1912) had deployed "romanticist" to similar effect, "it would be much more vigorous to use some plain English term that we can all understand, such as 'blighter'."

Kermode's essay was in part a critique of an earlier non-academic "inquest" on "Modernism" by Cyril Connolly's *The Movement*. Both belittlers seem to prefer assertion to argument.

As all objectives were gained and the complacent hypocrisy of the

Love in a Valley

(Valkyrie's Valpenk in Awesome Valhalla)

I use think Wotan was vicious
in all that gear, a real ace, a mega hunk

We flow high, a bitchen sesh,
It was radical

Those pointy things on his helmet
were truly gnarly, the Helanes were tubular.
And the Lowies.

Totally!

The bud was caj
we scarfed out. It was hot.
He maxed OK.

OK!
How come he got so gross?
such a bitch, so nasty?
a shanky spee?

OK!
Now I wanta say:
Gag me with a spoon!
What a gee!
You were kinda cool
but now you're grody
you make me barf
you're not but any more.

Oh my God!
Kiss my tinal.
What a nerd!
Get away!
Your fat butt disgusts me!

Valpenk: the dialect spoken by Valley Girl, originating in or near the San Fernando Valley, California. See Kermode, *Reminders* (TLS, October 29) and TLS Letters (November 12, December 3) and Mills: *The Guardian*, October 26.

Louis Simpson, and Fussell echoes his sentiments, adding that "after any war four soldiers are touchy". Fussell's war was spent as an infantryman of the line, and his account of it begins with the combination of accidents that brought an "upper-middle-class young gentleman" (who should have been in the Navy, at least, or in the OSS or Air Corps administration or editing the *Stars and Stripes*) into the 103rd Infantry Division. It then tells how at the age of twenty Fussell found himself leading forty rifleman into battle against the Germans. The horror of that battle, "loss apocalyptic than shabbily ironic", and the inadequacy and monodcity of the military and cultural apparatus that brought it into being and sought to explain it, have stayed with Fussell all his life. He was left with "a special, omphical knowledge, a feeling of ironic awareness manifesting itself in an intuitive skepticism about pretension, publicly enunciated truths, the vanities of learning, and the pomp of authority." These qualities are everywhere apparent in his writing, and are his great virtues.

Of the first quotation, Kermode remarks: "It is hard to say whether a good supervisor would be more depressed by the historical generalization or by the prose." Nor, I think, would the ideal supervisor find much comfort in the second. If you are going to trace a line of development from Mallarmé to Marinetti via Hausman's apophthegms, and uncertain grasp of the meaning of the work "velocity" is probably a help rather than hindrance.

Where the academic account puts forward ideas and evidence, the Royal Society account has to rely on a particular rhetoric. It is a rhetoric worth noting because of its current popularity among political and literary commentators. Writing in September 1981, Foreigne Worthington argued that the true reactionary must always be warning people against idealism and high-mindedness; and that such warnings are "bound often to take the form of verbal brutality, at best witty but at worst merely abusive, simply because these are the most effective corrosives with which to dissolve liberal waffling". Verbal brutality of this kind has contributed to the tone (and the success) of *Private Eye*, as well as to the tone of reviews by Kingsley Amis or Philip Larkin or C. H. Sisson. It serves to identify its exponent as a sympathetic plain man, an ally against the "liberal waffle" which diminishes us by its condescension. Conquest is by no means the first to apply corrosives to "liberal waffle" about modern literature, but to my mind his version of lovable cantankerousness is less sprightly than some.

However, at the end of his essay, the verbal brutality lifts for a moment. Conquest quotes some lines by Larkin, and suggests that they "could hardly have been written, but for the modernist interlude and its effect on the language". There, surely, is a case worth making, and one which would oblige its maker to attend to the kinds and qualities of writing.

I should perhaps add that several contributors to *Essays by Divers Hands* show no inclination to take part in the skirmish between *belles-lettres* and academic criticism. Michael Meyer writes about Ibsen and Strindberg; Tom Stacey about Andrew Young and R. S. Thomas; Andrew Wright about Trollope; and C. M. Woodhouse about Eliot's "Influence" on European literature. R. W. F. Tomlin tempers late in "What is literature? A new look".

Gavin Ewart

Valpenk: the dialect spoken by Valley Girl, originating in or near the San Fernando Valley, California. See Kermode, *Reminders* (TLS, October 29) and TLS Letters (November 12, December 3) and Mills: *The Guardian*, October 26.

Other ideas don't rise far enough to

The data of dispossession

John Melmoth

JANE ROGERS
Separate Tracks
207pp. Faber, £7.95.
0 571 11995 6

In a famous critique Virginia Woolf dismissed the literary realism of her contemporaries as cursory and "unfinished". With patrician distaste she refused to "complete" the works of Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy either by joining a society or by signing a cheque. *Separate Tracks* is an impeccable piece of social realism which assumes a continuity between art and life, between fiction and action, but which satirizes a sociology of good works and looks askance at the certainties of the picket line and mass demonstration. As the epigraph from Conrad makes plain, Jane Rogers intends that her novel, by adding the

data of dispossession, should provoke a rush of sympathy and understanding in the reader. Emma, her principal character, seeks authentic morganatic connections with the deprived. Politics and love merge in the educated heart.

The novel begins by sounding what Tennyson shudderingly dubbed the "troughs of Zolaism". The first four weeks of Anthony Childs's life are unremittingly horrible. The squalor of the room in which he is cradled is insisted on in a welter of gloom and gloom. His nameless young mother is systematically de-glamourized: her skinny arms and legs are "fish-belly" white, her head "more of a skull than a face". Parody is barely suspected, however, before Rogers begins to demonstrate considerable narrative versatility and command of nuance. The novel slides easily from drah mimesis into sophisticated psychoanalytical punning around a castrated African statue, to painterly evocations of suburban sprawl, the comedy of a mobile student soup

kitchen and the destructive utility of the schoolroom.

The lives of Emma and Anthony (Orph after his abandonment) run along separate lines, and the discrepancy generates mutual incomprehension. Emma, relatively privileged and anxiously middle class, comes, ironically, from the kind of family that is idealized in the "Peter and Jane" readers with which Orph is fobbed off in the foster home. The reality is different: her parents are separated and she is irked by a sense of her own nullity. Orph, institutionalized since infancy, persistently denied love, is blankly incapable of adequate response. Emma believes that she disarms in her reserve a kind of freedom which satisfies her desire for romance. She casts him variously as the stony-faced cowboy, a stoical Christ and even, exasperated by her 'A' level French studies, an adolescent Mersault.

His bizarre symbiosis originates

from the period when Emma, waiting to go up to university, takes a temporary job at the group home. Her *bien pensant* determination to stimulate the children precipitates a sequence of emotional disasters, and Orph's undemandingness seems increasingly attractive. He re-appears during her first term, at which point the ambivalence of her attitude towards this sixteen-year-old boy, compounded equally of protectiveness and embarrassment, compels a re-evaluation of her student concerns and the radical posturing of her friends. The gradual acquisition of political identities — Emma's libertarian and wet, Orph's violent and hard-left — hastens the eventual catastrophe.

While pursuing obscure interdependencies, *Separate Tracks* also concerns itself with the growth of knowledge about the world, as the unpalatable facts of national and international events are shown to impinge, in a variety of ways, on the characters.

Virgin in danger

Patricia Craig

PATRICK MCGINLEY

Goosefoot
254pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£7.50.
0 297 78209 6

Patrick McGinley's second novel is nothing if not eclectic. Clearly it is conceived as parody, but parody is confined to one genre only: among its targets are the self-discovery novel, the Dublin pub novel, the idiosyncratic Irish novel, the realistic rural novel, the comic-erotic novel, the whimsical novel, the aphoristic novel, the detective novel and the romance thriller. There are moments, too, when parody gives way to something more straightforward; any of these categories is liable to surface briefly in an authentic form. The author writes from a slight uncertainty of tone, humour suits him best, but he does not always try to be funny, and he is consistently successful when he does. His addition to the cryptic quip about the outlandish fobles sometimes goes the better of his literary judgment. So, to a certain extent, take the place of plot. You could say the novel is all but immobilized by its desire to take off in a number of different directions at once. For the author, you feel, the ingredients are of more consequence than the end product.

What do we have? An Irish virgin, an agricultural maid, albeit a modern one equipped with a science degree and endowed with the capacity to drink four pints of stout at a sitting, turns back on the chance of a farm of her own and heads for Dublin. Patricia Craig, who intends to learn more about herself than the Midlands can teach her, is sufficiently beautiful to arouse just continuously, and sufficiently large and strong to quell it with her bare hands. At the centre of Patrick's affections is her uncle Lar ("Lar" is Irish word for centre), whose steeliness and good husbandry have thrown into high relief the coldness of her parents' farm. (Their way, if there had been more about them, would undoubtedly have resembled those of the Howling Starkadders.)

Max Egremont writes intelligently and well, the more so when he controls his use of such words as "orotund" and "insipidated". His manipulation of flashback to describe Price's career is skilful, but his novel is uncertain of its identity. It begins as a political thriller, develops into an intimate portrait of Price, then returns briefly and unconvincingly to its thriller plot. The effect is bizarre, as though cuts have been made without a sure grasp of the economic balance of the whole or concern for the fate of characters who suddenly find themselves unemployed. Perhaps the structure is intended as a comment on other attempts to save the country.

which, as the blurb says, "puts a tentative foot into feminist waters". It is about the youngest sister of Hans Andersen's little mermaid, who loses her dead sister's prince below the sea, but declines to lose his legs, and returns "through the fog, arriving home in time for tea and early sherry with his wife, who was much relieved"; and so much for male protestations of love, concludes the seventh mermaid for "Mademoiselle Sept", or "Frauentein Seiber", or "Senorita Septima", or "the seventh m." as the author vaguely calls her). The tentative foot is pretty firmly anchored.

One needs to ask the reader's pardon for opening with such quotations. Also the writers: it is presumably not for this kind of writing that Jane Gardam's seven books have variously attracted the Whitbread Award, the David Higham Award, and the Whitbread First Book Award, as well as runner-upship in the 1978 Booker. No one unfamiliar with her work can lightly ignore such a consensus: the reason has the more carefully to be sought why this present collection seems strained and unconvincing, and the tone of the prose so often what has to be called pet.

The blurb also helpfully notes that the author is "married to a Q.C. with an international practice, and has travelled with him extensively, particularly in the Far East". And truly, without rivalry, the reader may come to the conclusion that she has been travelling too much. Too many time-zones and time-tables, too many dazzling, exhausting, exotic locales outside, too many air-conditioned hotels, have begun to perch her roots.

Not surprisingly, several stories concern Englishwomen who are visiting far-flung places: Hang Kong, which is fairly extensively annotated, and India, or somewhere near India called "Dra", which is also the scene of a second story, dedicated to the proposition that some of the construction engineers end so forth on the "international circuit" — "the Intercon, lot!" — can in fact resist local temptation, preferring to spend the evening mulling over the blarney with their colleagues and some whisky. The narrator here, in the "The First Adam", is one such, and talks a bit of nonsense: "My woman's made of paper. She's spread on the bed. She's a young girl, and she's not my wife. She's not young, neither — she's knocking on. She's my mistress, thalione...". And so he isn't at all, even to the reader. The Englishwomen are all very nice, and intelligent, and respond strongly to the dreadful poverty they encounter before they have to move on. And the author herself, with her male looks in her hand-drawn, seems to have become so experienced a visitor that she is not much at home in England and either. A noticeably high proportion of these stories have recourse to echoes of too old bundles of geriatric mischief, black or benign: a fairly frequent resort these days for writers of *roman à la mode*, but even the economics here lack persuasiveness. The common property of all these

stories, however, is efficiency; not a quality that promises much resonance or delicacy. One can see, for instance, that "Stout Trees", which applied the opening quotations here, began with the observation that the fossilized trees in shallow water on the Isle of Wight were restored to movement by the incoming tide, and that this suggested an image of the restoration of feeling to a numb heart. Whose number? A childless widow's heart? — and hey presto a story taking in Cambridge and Sacramento (for fashionable academic early married life), and the new widow's visit to their old friends the Robertsons, and her seeing, in one of Mrs Robertson's small sons, the exact replica of her husband (even to the "ding hard hands"). In eight pages, this communicates itself as a pretty rushed job.

In assembly-line terms, these stories would probably be called a hiccup. Which does not stop one hoping that their designer will tear up some at least of her air-line tickets, and go back to the drawing-board to work in increased tranquillity.

Cultivating ruin

J. K. L. Walker

FORBES BRAMBLE

Foals
188pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10895 0

Time was when London's rural commuters came spanking into the City in their gigs from Hackney or Brixton Hill; now the demi-pastorise is that much further on, on hour out from Victoria or Waterloo or Liverpool Street, with the forty good companions, crippled by gardening and the cost of the season ticket, jogging homewards hoping that the children are asleep, wives not eloped with local lovers and that the gin hasn't run out. Forbes Bramble runs his train into Charing Cross from green belt Kent where laden apple-trees and farm-girls beguile Charles Sweet and his morning travelling companions, Heskeith, Park-Rogers, Bennenden, Keith and Baker. It is high summer and hay-fever time for Sweet, a cultivator of man-high lettuce, as pink-eyed owl, he fancies, furs-spread his sneezing way compulsively towards another nerve-racking day with Games, Kowski and Bristow, architects of small distinction and less intuition of Sweet's unvoiced ambitions to be accepted as their partner.

Forbes Bramble is himself an architect by profession and his inside knowledge spices what would otherwise be a run-of-the-mill, if

So, wire me

Monty Haltrecht

SHOLOM ALEICHEM

Marlenbad
Translated by Alizu Shevring.
222pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£7.95.
0 297 78200 2

Marlenbad, written in 1911, is a novel of letters — working from what he had actually seen or heard. Sholom Aleichem composed much of his work in monologue or letter form. It is a Jewish comedy of manners set in a fashionable spa in western Bohemia when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It would be no surprise to find the Crown Prince and Grand Duchesses of opera disporting themselves here, while Schmitzer, with his refined morbidity, might have made it an arena for his games of embattled sexuality. But Aleichem instead lets loose a clutch of well-to-do Jews from the Nalevskis, the Jewish quarter of Warsaw. Wives and husbands are separated and letters

fly hysterically and hilariously back and forth between the visitors to Marlenbad and those left behind. In their new-found freedom young wives are ready to fling their bonnets over the windmill — or rather their sheitels, the wigs worn by the orthodox to cover shaven heads.

Rendest it all is Betzi Kurlander who, like Lady Teazle in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*, has opted for a rich, doting and much older husband. She begins by squandering her wilful way through Berlin's most fashionable store, in spite of her husband's anguished warnings about the customs, and the end, sure enough, sees her stranded at the customs, and she impatiently awaiting rescue. In the meantime, all the men have been drawn to her irresistibly — stubborn, cynical, even, perhaps, innocent, she has enraptured everyone in the merriest mayhem. She gets off scot-free herself while others pay the penalty in breakdown, divorce and blighted hopes.

The letters are full of delicious backbiting — each writer having as many faces as he or she has correspondents. The way to ensure that a secret is not kept is to commit it to paper and exhort the correspondent not to broadcast it. Letters pass treacherously from hand to hand, ending where they can do most damage. The Ymayyichke, with her three daughters to sell off, is a virtual head of a veritable Jewish school for scandal in a world self-contained as Sheridan's. But as the comedy speeds off at Southend with his secretary Carol, culminating in a muddled, and muddled, non-seduction scene. A similar encounter with the gross and powerful Myra Kowski in a Home Counties compound leaves the crop rather than Sweet ablaze, his demi-vierge status unimpaired. South of the Thames estuary, meanwhile, more level-headed approaches prevail as Sweet's wife Helen, bored with her afternoon men, dismisses them, and the lawyer Heskeith takes a day off from the train after thirty-eight years to murder his wife. As Games, Kowski and (the deceased) Bristow start to crumble, Sweet steps into from his own demolition job into the even when he writes, as here, about the speculator, the lawyer, the wealthy, the somewhat implausible *deus ex machina*.

As epigraphs to his chapters, Aleichem appends verses from a translation of *The Ship of Fools*, and their medieval ghorn offers a sardonic counterpoint to Sweet's tumblings before the figures of contemporary farce that surround him. Innocence, no matter how curled at the edges, wins through — although Sweet's lumpy ending, as architect to a property speculator, looks more like a carrot for the tame quince-pig that has at last succeeded in biting the hand that feeds it than the leopard's reward for changing its spots.

Aleichem wrote in Yiddish in order to reach the largest possible number of his people. It was he who made it a literary language, one inherited by Isaac Bashevis Singer — a royle language with character created through idiom, nuance, and rhythm. Alizu Shevring's translation is conscientious and lively, and we are indebted to her for making this delicious novel available in English for the first time.

Speaking out and holding back

Lewis Jones

GILLIAN AVERY

Onlookers
206pp. Collins. £6.95.
0 00 222673 1

Onlookers comprises a pair of cautionary tales: in the first a clever young man is humiliated for his boorishness; in the second an imaginative young woman causes suffering both for herself and others by her excessive reserve. The stories are linked by the journal of a seventeen-year-old orphan called Louise Fleming. Written during 1882-83, it begins with her arrival at Malwood House in Radnorshire, the home of her guardian, a clergyman and baronet some fifteen years her senior; during his course, Louise falls in love with this stern and lofty figure; by the end of it, she has agreed to marry him. The reader sees only fragments of this journal, but learns that it is full of amusing and confident sketches of local life, that it is shaped like a novel, and that there are suggestions in it of

mature and profound melancholy.

The manuscript was discovered in a second-hand book shop by Henry Tossell, a poet, a man of ravaged face and debauched past, who lives a life of conspicuous repentance in the oddities of Canterbury College, Oxford. It was published, with an introduction by Antony Adame, the Warden of Canterbury, and did very well. A Fleming Society was founded, with Tossell as President; the journal was taken up by the book-clubs and adapted for television. The publishers think it's time for a book about Louise consisting mainly of contemporary photographs, and Trevor Hancock, a former student at Canterbury, now a lecturer at Bradford, is invited to contribute a text.

Trevor is ill-suited to the task. He has written a book about the diaries of modern writers, such as Kafka and Gide, but has less enthusiasm for Louise. And, though he envies the Victorians their faith and optimism, he is enraged by their notions of propriety. As a socially unconscious undergraduate, Trevor's taciturnity is not the conventions of those he wished to impress; this has become an unfortunate habit. Limiting his

emotional range to "contempt and irritability", the Fleming Society, on which he relies for information and goodwill, seems to him to be disgustingly sentimental and, despite the wretchedness of its members, Jennifer, he makes his opinion very obvious. He relies on his collage mafia to protect him from the consequences of this provocation, but instead they give him the Stellan treatment.

The tale of Margaret Boys Talbot, a neighbour of Louise and ten years her senior, who was so proud that "she took care always to let it be thought that she had little opinion of herself", is much more complex. Trevor's downfall has the clarity of a Victorian moral exemplum; but the second part of the book offers an oblique vindication of his modern ideas. The true story of Louise is the opposite of what it appears. It is an invention of the archetypal romance, a sort of tragic *Emma*, in which, Knightley marries Harriet and lives miserably over after; a story about "ego death" and "id capture", and the nature of fictional truth. Gillian Avery's observation of both periods is impeccable, and her delicate touches reflect endlessly across the century.

Cornell

The West German radicals of the nineteen sixties announced the death of literature. For them literature, both past and present, as well as conventional discussions of literary issues, had lost its meaning. In *The Institution of Criticism*, Peter Uwe Hohendahl explores the implications of this cultural crisis from a Marxist perspective and attempts to define the tasks and responsibilities of criticism in advanced capitalist societies.

THE INSTITUTION OF CRITICISM

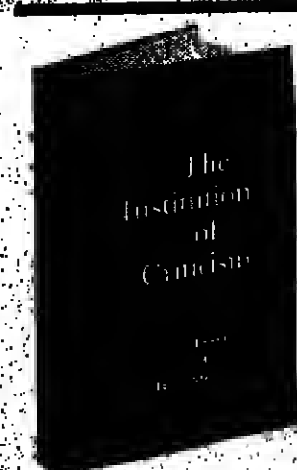
By PETER UWE HOHENDAH

Hohendahl takes a close look at the social history of literary criticism in Germany from the eighteenth century to the present, treating both academic criticism and the reviews that appeared in the mass media. While many other critics have decried the aesthetic and theoretical issues implicit in the practice of literature and literary criticism, Hohendahl focuses on the institutional side of criticism. Drawing on the tradition of the Frankfurt School and on Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere, he sheds light on some of the important political and social forces that help to shape literature and culture generally.

This volume is made up of seven essays originally published in German and a long new theoretical introduction written specifically by the author with English-language readers in mind. *The Institution of Criticism*, which calls for a criticism that reflects the ever-changing relations between culture, politics, and economics, will convey the rich possibilities of the German perspective for those who employ American or French critical techniques and for students of contemporary critical theory.

"The book gives a balanced, thought-provoking examination of postwar German literary debates.... An excellent introduction to an analysis of contemporary German literary criticism and helpful to anyone studying modern German culture or modern literary theory." — *Choice*

"A Marxist history of book reviewing and more formal modes of criticism to Germany from the late Enlightenment to the late 1960s. This volume not only exposes the social and political forces underlying public analysis and judgment of literature but expounds a theory of critical tasks and responsibilities.... Hohendahl's study is factually rich and contains modes of analysis certain to interest students of 'reception history' in any field of the humanities." — *The Virginia Quarterly Review*



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One of the old school

Andrew Hislop

MAX EGREMONT

The Ladies' Man
144pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.50.
0 436 14170 1

Max Egremont's first published novel, *The Ladies' Man*, is centred on a Tory politician of the old school, the school of scandal. (His party is not mentioned by name but there is no mistaking its identity.) John Price, a talented, ambitious minister and author of such works of conservative moderation as *No New Utopias* and *A Working Future* was forced to resign when it was revealed

that Melanie, a woman with whom he was casually but carnally acquainted, was the wife of a foreigner charged with drug and jewel smuggling. Price had tried to seduce Melanie, a woman of limited literary interests, with the inappropriate offering of a volume of Kipling's stories; she had been driven into his arms, though not by the delights of "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep" (a particular recommendation of Price) but rather by the promptings of a mysterious, crooked South African businessman.

The Ladies' Man, however, is not a work of prudence. The sex (conjured up retrospectively) is nothing Norma Levy would write home about and Price himself is not a figure of great moral disrepute. His self-sacrificing,

supporting wife is not jilted but dead, and his downfall is the result not of depraved lust so much as a sophisticated lack of perception of the evil around him, and the self-deception involved in his confusion of sexual desire with awareness of others: "If he was a ladies' man (Price told himself) it was because he had a real fascination for the intimate parts of the human condition, a real desire to probe the deepest hopes and anxieties of other lives." So much for the wisdom of carnal knowledge. One feels that the only anxieties he could hope to understand are his own.

Judging from the obscure suggestions of conspiratorial menace involving his occasional companion, Clare, and Peters, a utopian radical politician, his understanding of others is not even improved by his sexual decline. Obviously, a little earnest knowledge is still a dangerous thing.

His chief anxiety of the end is to save the country from Peters (whom he had befriended at Oxford), using evidence of the latter's complicity with the South African crook provided by a contrite Melanie. Unfortunately, his political career has not given him much experience in rescue acts. A protégé of Brodie, a doyen of the party who combined a romantic, nationalistic historical vision with the practicalities of political power, he appears to have pursued his personal political ambitions without having ailed his detached view of the realm by too "practical" an acquaintance (apart from a Blitz bedding of Peters's sister) with one of the two nations he wishes to save. Now an ill-fumbling wreck of a man, he has to travel north to Peters's home territory to seek high relief for his parents' farm. (Their way, if there had been more about them, would undoubtedly have resembled those of the Howling Starkadders.)

Max Egremont writes intelligently and well, the more so when he controls

his use of such words as "orotund" and "insipidated". His manipulation of flashback to describe Price's career is skilful, but his novel is uncertain of its identity. It begins as a political thriller, develops into an intimate portrait of Price, then returns briefly and unconvincingly to its thriller plot. The effect is bizarre, as though cuts have been made without a sure grasp of the economic balance of the whole or concern for the fate of characters who suddenly find themselves unemployed. Perhaps the structure is intended as a comment on other attempts to save the country.

There's an ordinary story, or at least the bare bones of one, superimposed which is fairly extensively annotated, and India, or somewhere near India called "Dra", which is also the scene of a second story, dedicated to the proposition that some of the construction engineers end so forth on the "international circuit" — "the Intercon, lot!" — can in fact resist local temptation, preferring to spend the evening mulling over the blarney with their colleagues and some whisky. The narrator here, in the "The First Adam", is one such, and talks a bit of nonsense: "My woman's made of paper. She's spread on the bed. She's a young girl, and she's not my wife. She's not young, neither — she's knocking on. She's my mistress, thalione...". And so he isn't at all, even to the reader. The Englishwomen are all very nice, and intelligent, and respond strongly to the dreadful poverty they encounter before they have to move on. And the author herself, with her male looks in her hand-drawn, seems to have become so experienced a visitor that she is not much at home in England and either. A noticeably high proportion of these stories have recourse to echoes of too old bundles of geriatric mischief, black or benign: a fairly frequent resort these days for writers of *roman à la mode*, but even the economics here lack persuasiveness. The common property of all these

which has nothing to do with doctrinaire feminism. Sadly, though, by her own admirably methodical procedures, by the need to be true to the complexities of the emotions and at the same time, to bring her story to a satisfying and dramatic conclusion. The climax fails to explain or resolve the contradictions of the Bristol's marriage; Cheever writes herself into a corner, and the novel takes an uncomfortable leap out of realism into psychological fantasy.

Susan Cheever suffers from the inevitable comparison with her father, John Cheever. Inevitably, in that the daughter has chosen to cover the same ground as her father did: literary New York and rural New England. John Cheever combined detailed and precise observation with a warm humanism and wry structural ironies which lifted his work above the immediate targets of his mild satire. *The Case* is brilliantly evocative of intimate scenes of life, but it lacks the vision necessary to knit the details into a stronger, broader fabric.

Hampshire estate left to the Bristol's by Julia's father: The house, damp and disintegrating, is an emblem of a past which still exerts a compelling power; but it lacks the comfort and securities Julia desperately needs. The abandoned and empty manor, built by Julia's father, provides the novel's central image. This elephant case, in which William is eventually trapped by his wife while she acts out a sinister ritual of wifely devotion, is an almost too obvious symbol of the constraints of work, status, declining health and failing love. Locally arresting and suggestive detail is interlarded with symbols like the cage; overall, the tone lacks assurance.

At the novel's climax — heavily signalled and thus somewhat deadened — Cheever tries to create a kind of synthesis, linking past and present and tying the novel's emotional logic more firmly to the terse dramatic structure she has employed.

Despite its flaws, *The Case* shows a remarkable grasp of emotional nuance and social narrowness, characteristic of a sensibility

while Cathy, ever conscious of not being the "sturdy, lusty Brunnhilde" she thinks he really would have liked, struggles not to let him go. The result is a union at once unhappy and charged with love, until, shortly before his premature death from a series of heart attacks, they both begin to mellow. For them there is not — as there was in another Anglo-German marriage — an apocalyptic sense of having come through, but they do learn to live together, and losing him leaves her shaken and inconsolable.

Mrs Wendorf has many strengths as a writer, one of them being a wonderful economy. She can pin down a complex mood or experience by referring to a few external details. Germany's humiliation becomes the ridiculous anti

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Almost coming through

Savkar Altinel

PATRICIA WENDORF

Peacefully: In Berlin
180pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.95.
0 241 10885 3

That designers of dust-jackets and writers of blurbs are not necessarily an author's best friends is amply confirmed by this slim book, which comes equipped with a reproduction of the heavily "symbolic" painting by J. Armstrong showing a gigantic flower rising from the ruins of a bombed town, and a solemn exhortation that "a loving marriage between a German man and an English woman has more potential for healing old wounds than any cold-blooded political declaration", but turns out to be sensitive, intelligent and beautifully written all the same.

On her way back to Germany for the first time in years, Patricia Wendorf's middle-aged English heroine, Cathy Baumann looks back on her life with her dead German husband Kurt while the Hook van Holland-Berlin Express carries her eastwards. Everything pertaining to her journey is related in the conventional past tense, but her memories, which make up the bulk of the novel, are given throughout in the present. This device, like its cinematic counterpart the soundless slow-motion sequence, is of course a cliché, but it is deployed here with great success, making it seem as if it is indeed the present which is dead, while the past is forever alive.

Handsome, blond Kurt is first seen as a prisoner-of-war in England. He then marries Cathy and, after a brief attempt to set up home in the chaotic Germany of 1948, they return to her native Midlands. A proud man bewildered and embittered by defeat, he sees his marriage and increasing anglicization as the ultimate triumph of the enemy and withdraws into himself,

of emerald green serge ("You look exactly like Robin Hood", says Cathy) which is issued to Kurt on his discharge from prison camp. Places, too, are evoked with the same precision.

Smile and metaphor are handled well, and daily speech (particularly the speech of Germans, something which almost no one manages to bring off) is reproduced perfectly: "Ja! du hast recht. Ich bin froh, I-am-cheeky. All German girls tell me the same thing I'm-cheeky, I-stay put? You like it?" Publishers, who cannot always be relied on in such matters as presentation, are occasionally better when it comes to hawking their wares. It is to be hoped that this excellent novel will find the wide audience it deserves.

Untender traps

Brian Morton

SUSAN CHEEVER

The Cage
180pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£6.95.
0 297 78201 0

Susan Cheever's third novel is a curious, nostalgic look at contemporary America. William Bristol is a senior editor with a prestigious New York magazine, not unlike *Newsweek*, where Cheever worked for a time. Pressured and harassed, Bristol has succumbed to a kind of anesthetized efficiency, become an organization man. His wife, Julia, unfilled, has abandoned herself to alcohol, paranoid fantasies of violence and a wistful attachment to her own childhood and her dead father.

The Cage alternates between the anonymous bustle of New York City and the inbred, claustrophobic atmosphere of Northwood, the New

Hamshire estate left to the Bristol's by Julia's father: The house, damp and disintegrating, is an emblem of a past which still exerts a compelling power; but it lacks the comfort and securities Julia desperately needs. The abandoned and empty manor, built by Julia's father, provides the novel's central image. This elephant case, in which William is eventually trapped by his wife while she acts out a sinister ritual of wifely devotion, is an almost too obvious symbol of the constraints of work, status, declining health and failing love. Locally arresting and suggestive detail is interlarded with symbols like the cage; overall, the tone lacks assurance.

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FICTION

Highly arched

Anne Duchêne

JANE GARDAM

The Pangs of Love and Other Stories
153pp. Hamish Hamilton. £7.50.
0 241 10912 6

"And there you were with bright, ridiculous, misapprehensions, mocking eyes and long hard hands", thinks the narrator of one of the stories here, and while one is still pondering the attraction — indeed, even the appearance — of "ridiculous eyes", she continues: "It was not right or dignified to love so much. To let a man rule so much. It is obsession and not love, a mental illness not a life. And of course, with marriage came the quarrelling and pain because I knew there were so many others, and you not coming home, and teasing when you did and saying that there was only you did and of course I knew it was not so because of — cheap and dirty things like — the smell of sweat. It was worst just before the Robertsons went away."

The title story in this collection is one which, as the blurb says, "puts a tentative foot into feminist waters". It is about the youngest sister of Hans Andersen's little mermaid, who loses her dead sister's prince below the sea, but declines to lose his legs, and returns "through the fog, arriving home in time for tea and early sherry with his wife, who was much relieved"; and so much for male protestations of love, concludes the seventh mermaid for "Mademoiselle Sept", or "Frauentein Seiber", or "Senorita Septima", or "the seventh m." as the author vaguely calls her). The tentative foot is pretty firmly anchored.

One needs to ask the reader's pardon for opening with such quotations. Also the writers: it is presumably not for this kind of writing that Jane Gardam's seven books have variously attracted the Whitbread Award, the David Higham Award, and the Whitbread First Book Award, as well as runner-upship in the 1978 Booker. No one unfamiliar with her work can lightly ignore such a consensus: the reason has the more carefully to be sought why this present collection seems strained and unconvincing, and the tone of the prose so often what has to be called pet.

The blurb also helpfully notes that the author is "married to a Q.C. with an international practice, and has travelled with him extensively, particularly in the Far East". And truly, without rivalry, the reader may come to the conclusion that she has been travelling too much. Too many time-zones and time-tables, too many dazzling, exhausting, exotic locales outside, too many air-conditioned hotels, have begun to perch her roots.

Not surprisingly, several stories concern Englishwomen who are visiting far-flung places: Hang Kong, which is fairly extensively annotated, and India, or somewhere near India called "Dra", which is also the scene of a second story, dedicated to the proposition that some of the construction engineers end so forth on the "international circuit" — "the Intercon, lot!" — can in fact resist local temptation, preferring to spend the evening mulling over the blarney with their colleagues and some whisky. The narrator here, in the "The First Adam", is one such, and talks a bit of nonsense: "

commentary

A policy for literature?

Robert Hewison

By the time this is published Charles Osborne, Literature Director of the Arts Council, will be well away from the Department's offices in Covent Garden. He will be getting ready to go to America, where he will spend some substantial weeks enjoying contemporary American opera and doing some more work on a new Dictionary of Opera he is writing for Simon and Schuster.

The day before he took his leave the Literature Advisory Panel met once more to discuss policy. On the agenda was not the swingeing attack by the panel member Michael Church on almost all the Literature Department's activities, reported in "Behind the lines" two weeks ago, but a paper from the Director himself. Charles Osborne declined an invitation to write his own account of the paper. The original was "too scrappy" and he had no time. Instead he agreed to be interviewed.

Michael Church's criticisms appear to have passed the Literature Department completely by. He said he had nothing to say about Church's paper at all. Instead, he proposes that the Literature policy of the Arts Council shall remain very much as it was before. There are two areas of fresh emphasis: the first runs completely contrary to Church's proposal. Church had questioned the validity of giving grants to publishers, and suggested that some of them were manipulating the system. Osborne is in favour of giving grants to publishers. In order to subsidize not just single works, but series of titles, Secker and Warburg, Allison and Busby, and John Calder are beneficiaries. The new grants to publishers will include specific sums committed to promoting the books that are subsidized.

Osborne's other new policy proposal which enabled him to state with confidence that the Literature Department would be asking for considerably more money next year—is

for a more thorough investigation of the feasibility of setting up a number of bookshops outside London. The Arts Council has a shop in London, so why not disseminate literature through similar outlets elsewhere? (This idea has been around for some time, and may not find favour with booksellers.) The scheme would be expensive, and the Arts Council would have to be firmly persuaded that it was worthwhile.

The difference between Osborne's "more-of-the-same" views and Church's radical proposals for cutting grants to "mediocre" magazines and other crumbling literary edifices; for giving more help to living writers—in particular academic authors of non-fiction—and generally re-animating the stultified activities of the Department, illustrates the difficulties of administering patronage the Arts Council's way. Osborne has been there for almost as long as there has been a Literature Department, (established, well after the rest, in 1966). Michael Church has been on the Advisory Panel since last April. Yet the Director can claim that he is doing no more than following the policies laid down by the twenty members of the Arts Council, policies that they have agreed on the advice of their specialist panels. Meanwhile the membership of both Council and panels are constantly changing. Two years ago the then Literature Advisory Panel agreed that the emphasis should be on helping readers rather than writers. That is the policy upon whose execution Michael Church is expected to advise.

I put it to Charles Osborne that because he knew what the Department's policy was supposed to be, and he had to explain it to advisers who didn't, he was in a far more powerful position than a mere servant of the Council. He did not deny the value of the continuity of his experience—but "any serious suggestion that has come to me I have put to the Council".

In Osborne's view, the reason for all these arguments about "literature policy" is the unique difficulty in

defining literature. Other art forms are instantly recognizable and take place in definable buildings. But many of the things that go on between hard covers are not literature at all. "The definition must be something that is based on imaginative or creative writing—some non-fiction must surely be classed as literature. The criterion really is the force of the writing, and the *ad hoc* nature of the Literature Department's policy must be to spread the knowledge of good literature of the present and past as widely as possible."

Why then did so many people feel that this wasn't being done? Why was the Department so often accused of being lazy? "There is a limit to what I can do without being called interventionist. You know, we give a greater number of grants than we refuse. It happens that even successful schemes like Creative Writing Fellowships are not expanded because more institutions do not apply. When urged to do something to help living writers who cannot get their work published, the Department's investigations fail to turn up any muted Miltons.

The minutes of what appears to have been a desultory meeting of the Literature Panel will now go forward for consideration by the formal policy makers, the Council members themselves. With Sir William Rees-Mogg as Chairman, and Margherita Laski combining her chairmanship of the Literature Panel with Vice-Chairmanship of the Council, it is to be hoped that the discussion of literature policy will not be proportionate to the tiny amount the Literature Department spends.

Charles Osborne, on his sabbatical, will not be taking part in the debate. His aim is to set the Department on an even keel, and, some time within the next four years, to withdraw. Fresh literary projects beckon him, and he wishes to take up some new administrative work while there is still time for him to do so. This hint of retirement has nothing to do with the attacks that are regularly made on him. "Really, I thrive on them."

The survival of idealism

John Hope Mason

DAVID HARE

A Map of the World
Lyttelton Theatre

Despite the large claims David Hare's early plays made to be describing the state of England, there was always a danger that the general view, the overall verdict, would collapse into a purely local and personal reaction. This was particularly the case with *Plenty*, where what set out to be a chronicle of disappointment at the unfulfilled promise of Britain's post-war history came across more as a projection back onto it of the disappointment of the 1960s. Hare is too good a writer and too accomplished a playwright not to have made *Plenty* a strong theatrical experience, but the underlying difficulty remained.

In his new play, *A Map of the World*, he has confronted this difficulty—the relationship between individual experience and general judgment—in the context not of England but of the world. The difficulty is not completely resolved—in part because other concerns are equally pressing—but that is less important than the courage Hare shows in grasping this particular nettle and the tenacity with which he follows his theme through to its conclusion. In the end the play lives up to its high ambition.

The action shifts between a film studio in England and a Unesco conference on poverty in Bombay. Among those invited to speak at the conference is a famous Indian novelist, Victor Mehta, who grew up in a village in Bihar, came to England and now

lives in Shropshire. Mehta has little respect for the United Nations and even less for Marxist reformers; he sees self-deception everywhere and regards that as worse than poverty. As a writer he is dedicated to exposing lies wherever they occur, however uncomfortable the results may be.

Also present at the conference is a young, idealistic, left-wing English journalist, and the clash between him and Mehta creates the dynamic of the play. Both men are affected by the other's beliefs and both are altered by their meeting. Back in England Mehta writes a book about the conference and this is now being turned into a film. A beautiful American actress had also been in Bombay and the two men's pursuit of her—Mehta in a marriage, the other in a romance—provides the romantic interest of the film.

There is much that is unsatisfactory about this material. The framework of the film studio is cumbersome and adds little of consequence. Neither the fact that the film trivializes the serious issues of the conference nor the suggestion that people in England are interested only in sex and cars, is sufficiently well realized to justify these scenes. The only exception to this is the final scene, which introduces a new dimension and gives an impressive ending to the play.

The romantic theme is also perfunctory. The part of the American actress, poorly performed by Diana Quick, is underwritten and hardly binds the narrative together in the way that was intended. As in other Hare plays love is more suggested than expressed. Here, where it is meant to be central to the action, its absence is glaring.

This lack of definition applies more generally. There is a lack of texture, of idiom; that is unusual in Hare's

writing. Both the film world and the conference world have a disembodied, inauthentic feel about them. Everyone seems to be in transit. In one sense this could be a true reflection both of film studios and of life in India, where the visitor does indeed feel intransient beside the vast immensity of Indian life. But in the theatre we need something more specific to engage us, and that is something which the play takes a long time to deliver.

But eventually it does deliver. We see the pain of the world, poverty and injustice, first from one angle, then from another. Each view inspires different questions, and at each point the truth comes to look different. What might sound schematic in synopsis is in fact rich in performance. Our reservations fall away as we come closer and closer to the matter in hand: the survival of idealism, the possibility of change.

At the centre of the play is the Indian novelist and in this role Kishan Sethi is magnificent, combining anger, warmth and tremendous dignity. Bill Nighy as the young idealist is also good, and the production, by Hare himself, is beautifully handled. Its apocalyptic and leisurely pace are appropriate to a play in which the earlier restlessness has gone; in its place is something that is less finished, but more penetrating. The voices are quieter but they carry further.

A Map of the World is published by Faber and Faber (83pp, £3.50, 0 571 1996 4). Admirers of the Merchant-Ivory films will be interested in the fact that we are getting interested in their work and wanting to know what happens next, we have to rejoin modern India in modern India to find out how she's getting on and what she thinks. It would be far more interesting to know what Olivia thinks but we can't



A portrait of Rana Anur Singh II, c 1698—a work included in the exhibition Indian Drawing which has been selected by Howard Hodgkin for the Hynyard Gallery. It can be seen until April 17, and will be reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

Backwards and forwards

Mary Furness

Heat and Dust
Curzon Cinema

Ruth Praver Jhabvala's novel *Heat and Dust* is the story of Olivia, a young English memsahib of the 1920s, recently married and in India for the first time. It is all new to her and she does not understand it, particularly the rigid conventions which keep the Indians and the English apart. Her hard-working husband leaves her alone all day. She loves him but is gradually seduced, without being aware of what is happening to her, by the Nawab (the local Indian prince), who, with his entourage, pays her visits, takes her on picnics, and entertains her in his palace. She becomes pregnant. Douglas, her husband, regards this as the apex of their dreams; the Nawab has no doubt that the child is his. Olivia has a "marriage" and is found out and exposed by the local English doctor. She flees to the Nawab's palace and crosses over to the "other side" for ever. She lives out her days alone in the Nawab's house in the mountains and it is a matter for speculation how she feels and what she does, since she no longer communicates with anybody.

All that is known now about Olivia is from hearsay and from the letters which she wrote to her sister. These have been left to her step-granddaughter Anne, a modern young Englishwoman, who becomes fascinated by her story and goes to Sahapur to immerse herself more deeply in it. She too is seduced by Douglas, gets pregnant (by her Indian landlord) and the story leaves her, waiting to have her baby and living near the house in the mountains in which Olivia ended her days.

The film is a great deal better than the book. As a novel it is thin and unsatisfactory. One feels somehow cheated by it; written as if it were a true story, it has just such deficiencies as an incomplete slice of life told in letters might (though would not necessarily) have. Just as we are getting interested in their work and wanting to know what happens next, we have to rejoin modern India in modern India to find out how she's getting on and what she thinks. It would be far more interesting to know what Olivia thinks but we can't

because, at least as she is revealed in her letters, she does not have any inclination to introspection.

In contrast, the characters in *Heat and Dust*, of which the book is a very good film (1979) do not seem to have any inclination to introspection. In *Heat and Dust*, since scenes are not matter; indeed it is a positive advantage in the film, which is absolutely faithful to the book (the book could indeed be the book of the film.) Now we have people's feelings, expressions, clothes and houses to look at. The switches backwards and forwards from 1920s Sahapur to 1980s Sahapur work smoothly to show that Olivia's work seems to be much more poignant to her than we can see, for instance, Olivia's love as it was when she lived in it and as it is now, used for Government offices. What was Dr and Mrs Sapovitch's bungalow is now the Post Office. The Nawab's palace is uninhabited but has a flavour of the gaudy glamour which we have seen Olivia describe.

Literally fleshed out, the characters in the celluloid version are far more real than they are in the book. Here Olivia (Greta Scacchi), pretty young, vacuous, fun-loving, uncomprehending and dimwitted, seducible. Here is her husband (Christopher Cazenove), upright, hard-working, uncomprehending and simple. Here is the handsome Nawab (Shashi Kapoor), charming, enigmatic, and a little bit of a playboy. Here are the Begum (Jaffrey) and her entourage, dressed in a fantasy of Senta, showed how the Nawab's approach could illuminate a (romantic and coherent) work. But in the case of *The Magic Flute*, where the film is already a hotch-potch of pantomime, melodrama and obscure symbolism, it works much less well. The Olivia has to endure. Even Anne, portrayed by Julie Christie, is unattractive, although she is, if anything, even more vacuous than Olivia. Only she is unreflexive; but her relations with India are so straightforward and have none of the passion and romance of Olivia's. The pleasure and understanding of the film even if one does have the suspicion that with its obligatory soft-focus photography—it is too easily

A state of slight hysteria

April FitzLyon

Tchaikovsky
The Queen of Spades
London Coliseum

From the moment the curtain rises on David Pountney's exciting new production of *The Queen of Spades*, we realize that this is not going to be a conventional evening. Instead of the usual children playing with their parents in the Summer Garden, to whom we are accustomed, we see little white-clad Napoleons symbolically attacking the infant Hermann. From then on we know that anything is possible, and we are not mistaken. This *Queen of Spades* unfolds in no known time or space; it is all—or almost all—in the mind.

Purists will no doubt assert that Pountney has taken too many liberties with the libretto; but Modeste Tchaikovsky's melodramatic travesty of Pushkin's astringent, elegant and witty story is not sacrosanct, although it pleased the composer. Pountney does take liberties but, with one or two exceptions, they are justified. In fact, he should have taken more liberties; if he had substituted Pushkin's ending—Hermann in a madhouse—into the film, he could have done so with all pretence to logic, and shown everything as a figment of Hermann's imagination. As it is, the

few remaining shreds of realism, necessitated by the plot, are out of step with the rest of the production. Pountney has all the same created a splendid theatrical experience, a production more choreographic than operatic, which enraptures the audience not in the rather silly meanderings of the plot, but in the neurotic fantasies of a deranged mind. Maria Björnson's designs, besides being a delight to the eye, play an important part in creating this illusion. White predominates in this hallucinatory world: long white gauze curtains surround the stage or, on occasion, are drawn across it to isolate Hermann even further from reality. There is no other scenery except, when necessary, the gaming-table, and chairs, cunningly deployed by what appear to be members of the Red Army. The chorus, its members all dressed alike and in muted colours, assumes a new importance, and is used like the chorus in a Greek tragedy. In the centre of this pale and ghostly world is the black figure of Hermann, the only character in the opera, apart from the Countess, who matters.

Pushkin's Hermann is an unscrupulous, cold and, gripped by a single obsession: money, which he hopes to obtain through the secret of the three cards. His one-track mind is unshaken by his failure to do so. But Tchaikovsky's Hermann has two obsessions: money, and Liza; it is the pursuit of money, rather than Liza, which causes his downfall. Pushkin had no sympathy for his Hermann; but Tchaikovsky "felt sorry" for his hero. On the day when he composed the

music for Hermann's suicide, he noted in his diary: "I wept dreadfully when Hermann gave up the ghost." He confessed to his brother that he enjoyed "the very agreeable state of slight hysteria" which these tears provoked; and he said that, as he identified Hermann with Nikolai Figner, the handsome, elegant and romantic—but not, it seems, homosexual—tenor for whom he wrote the part, he shared very keenly in his sad fate. But the neurotic music of the opera, akin to that of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, gives the lie to this identification; and the orchestra, conducted with passionate urgency by Mark Elder, has little difficulty in persuading us that Tchaikovsky identified Hermann not with Figner, but with himself. Hermann, the outsider with a guilty secret, inwardly hysterical, but outwardly always Teutonically correct, parallels Tchaikovsky, the brilliantly successful public figure, always at risk because of his homosexuality. Now that we know that Tchaikovsky's own death, only three years after he composed the opera, was probably suicide, his tears and "slight hysteria" when composing the music for Hermann's death take on a new significance.

Graham Clark's musically undistinguished performance as Hermann hovers uneasily between Pushkin's cold, mad Hermann, and Tchaikovsky's warmer, hysterical hero. Clark's paranoia, well portrayed, nevertheless begins too early, right at the start of the opera, when there is insufficient reason for it.

Of course, if Hermann were reliving it all in the madhouse, this would not matter; but, since he dies, some semblance of chronology is necessary. Clark fails to engage our pity; his performance is always interesting, but not moving. We cannot believe in his love for Liza; but perhaps Tchaikovsky couldn't believe in it either. Clark's treatment of the unfortunate girl (Marie Siorach) at times seems to parallel Tchaikovsky's revision for his own bride. In any case, Liza should be just an idea, not this very flesh-and-blood creature. In this production Liza's suicide is not explicit; in the form of an old coat, she is reunited with Hermann in death. This is one of Pountney's liberties which does not come off.

Even purists could not carp at the scene in the Countess's bedroom—the only scene taken directly from Pushkin. This is beautifully and conventionally staged, and admirably sung and acted by Sarah Walker. Less effective is the apparition of not one, but several countesses, who suggest a *corps de ballet* rather than hallucinations, and fail to cause the necessary *trisson*.

Tchaikovsky once said that he could not write opera unless he could "love and pity" the characters. If Pountney's production fails, despite its brilliance and sensitivity, to make us love and pity the characters, this is the librettist's fault, not his; but he does make us pity the composer, which is, perhaps, a truer interpretation of this opera.

Convenient problems

Peter Kemp

Shakespeare Lives!
Channel 4

There are times in *Shakespeare Lives!* when you feel that he's more likely to be turning in his grave. Mostly, they are when Michael Bogdanov is outlining schemes to make his plays "modern and relevant", "plays for today". Luckily, there's more to *Shakespeare Lives!* than this. Besides canvassing "possibilities of making Shakespeare more accessible in the 1980s", it aims to "explore extracurricular situations", with actors from the National Theatre interpreting scenes and an audience responding volubly to them.

About the former issue, Bogdanov is bursting with beliefs. Prominent among them is that there is a need to offer "Shakespeare by analogy"—in which parallels from contemporary politics are imported haphazardly into the plays. Making Shakespeare's drama seem like something else, however, is only the start: Bogdanov also wants to turn it into something else. Considering that "anything goes that is viable" to make Shakespeare understandable and accessible to a modern audience, he emphasizes: "anything goes—that means rising up the texts, cutting them, snicking them together again." What he envisages is a "re-appraisal" but "re-writing".

This approach had been tried in previous centuries; a member of the audience sharply pointed out, with speeches re-shuffled and tragic conclusions easily re-cast to suit some supposed taste of the times. This was one analogy Bogdanov did not find: instructive, and he by-passed it with some muttering about the difference being that his plans for the plays were to "change them, cut them—for now".

The programmes have given some intimations of what might be entailed. Bogdanov feels happier with his Shakespeare; it appears, when it mixes modernism and the modern. Extrapolating from the final scene of *Timon of Athens*, for example, he luridly declared that Alababbes "has echoes of every single Fascist dictator" and "instigates a Fascist dictatorship". But the play, snarlingly savage as it often is, merely shows us a moderate

a man who pledges that he will respect the Athens he has conquered, who agrees to execute only enemies "set out for reproof" by the Athenian senate, and who guarantees that his troops will be subject to "your public laws/At heaviest answer".

Bogdanov's taste for squeezing texts into any shape he likes is much aided by his removal of scenes from the controlling pressure of their overall context, making them seem more plastic than they are. The first plays he has handled, too—*The Taming of the Shrew* and *Timon of Athens*—are conveniently problematical. They also afford special scope for his desire to link Shakespeare with contemporary concerns. *Timon of Athens*, for example, he interprets as an indictment of capitalism; this, he feels, is why it is now—as he somewhat unfortunately phrased it—"gaining currency".

Some members of the audience were less enamoured of the play. Its language was too difficult, for one thing. How can you get "those fabulous meanings about the meaning of life across to your average person"? It was asked, with all that archaic vocabulary lumbering the lines: "perhaps much of it needs to be translated". A suggestion from Daniel Massey that people take the trouble to edit themselves to understand the play met with predictable resistance: he was sounding a bit elitist. And the point was soon smothered under woolly talk about the possible need for "total re-education and overhauling of our education system".

Shakespeare Lives! has considerable snags, but fortunately sometimes manages to twitch itself free of them. When unimpeded by the pull towards politics or preaching, it provides a fascinating opportunity to observe actors in rehearsal. Most of those involved are "rivetingly good": Daniel Massey and Suzanne Bertish so far quite outstanding. Watching them ease themselves more and more comfortably into a role is eye-catching. Speeches are tugged satisfyingly into place as the right intonation is discovered. Changes of pace and volume shake out different patterns from the same material. Accents are dragged over lines to see what, if anything, they add. It is these actors, to their virtuosic renderings of Shakespeare's scenes, who justify the programme's title.

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Oxford University
Press

to the editor

History of Parliament

Sir, - In J. H. Hexter's interesting review (January 21) of the latest volumes of *The History of Parliament* he writes:

The House of Commons 1509-1558, of course, escapes all of the above sorts of criticism. It does so because it has no "Introductory Survey" in criticism. One can avoid all errors of commission by doing nothing. . . . To construct the Introductory Survey of the 1509-1558 volumes on the same general principles as the previously published volumes appears to have been truly impossible. Professor Bindoff showed very good sense indeed in not trying to do it.

In 1981 Professor Bindoff spent his last week in the United States with me. From my house he flew directly to New York in order to fly to London. Just over a month later, in December, he died.

While with me we discussed his future plans. He told me his first duty was to write an introductory survey to the volumes of the Parliamentary History, which he was editing and which were otherwise approaching completion.

He was not a man to shirk what he considered to be his duty because it might be difficult to accomplish. He was not a man to neglect a task just in order to avoid making errors. Nor was he a man to follow blindly patterns set by predecessors. Had he lived I am sure he would have written an Introductory Survey and would have found a way to write a useful (and good) one based on the information available about his period.

GEORGE WOODBRIDGE,
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Sir, - I have read J. H. Hexter's stirring essay-review (January 21) with great interest - and with some little relief at finding myself among those unqualified to meet the stern challenge he puts. Only his first few paragraphs tell me his competence, and of these I must first say that, whatever their faults, I shall doubtless reward them with admiration along with the rest. There are times when grand subjects sprawling beyond the range of any one scholar require the rare perspicacity and perspective that Hexter has brought to this one, and there is a certain vigour in what he says about the origins of medieval parliamentary institutions. Yet it would be difficult to find a better illustration of the confusion that at present surrounds that subject in general discourse.

If the problem is to explain a uniquely Western institution, it won't do to point to an eleventh-century genesis of the representation of obligatory service to lords. Little or nothing in eleventh-century practice yet pointed to that device, nor when it came - was there anything in it more palpably convenient for Europeans faced with considerable distances and time spans than for the patrone and clients of non-Western traditional societies. Hexter wisely avoids speaking of "feudal" origins of representation, only to slip into this conceptual pit of associating community and delegation with lordship and allegiance. In England, at least, early village deputies seem to have answered to exigencies that were not peculiarly seigniorial - nor even, for all we yet know, peculiarly Western.

Somewhat the same may be said of the deputations to, and by, Hispanic courts. To speak of those as "a bright idea . . . of some European ruler or other" - probably the king of León - is so much less than the whole known truth as to mislead. Those courts were ritual celebrations of territorial security - in which the incipient delegation of burghs was no more (or less) representative than the attendance of the king's prelates and barons. Nor was the summons of elect without precedent in 1188. What was towards the middle of the twelfth century was the conceptual clustering

of local association, liberties, and election - a clustering that only gradually and obscurely made its way into the practice of secular consultation. It may well have had its trial runs in the administrative practice of the Church, a practice of which Hexter makes no mention. Indeed, if one seeks to understand the uniquely Western origins of modern representation - although given our present state of ignorance that inquiry seems to me premature - one must look to the Church, and perhaps not even far beyond. It was there that classical ideas of public interest, obligation and corporate identity were revived and put to the service of new debates over spheres of constitutional power. Only more gradually did such debates - or, more exactly, politics - become common in lay assemblies. And the circumstances in which all of these (and other) changes took place are not only poorly understood, but have to this day never been addressed as a historical problem. Only "corporatist" historians have thought in large terms of a transformation of social régime, but that transformation has yet to be described concretely, dated and explained, let alone placed in its cultural context.

This is a more difficult problem than that of the origins of parliament precisely because it is a problem of cultural change, not of institutional origins. Contemporary testimonies, as so often, seem to face backward, not forward - and they tell too tentatively, yet not quite innuently, of the shifts that interest us. With these remarks I cease, of course, to criticize Professor Hexter, whose lucid account more fully builds on a foundation of underexamined assumptions about the peculiarities of Western experience. But the original nature of those peculiarities will have to be identified with more precision than has yet been applied before they can be held to characterize "the birth of Western freedom".

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Professing Literature

Sir, - Donald H. Reiman (Letters, January 7) credits the New Criticism, and in particular its "Fugitive / Agrarian wing", with bringing about the present woeful state of the profession. He narrows his sights even further: the only members of that wing he names are R. P. Warren, the distinguished poet and novelist, and myself though I was never a member of the Fugitive group nor one of the original Agrarians.

They badly damaged the study of literature, so Reiman's account runs, by sharply constricting the accepted canon of literary works, by squeezing the joy out of reading literature and by diverting students from the study of the great writers into a barren study of literary theory. Worse still, the New Critics misled up a generation of theorists such as Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom and Stanley Fish.

Mr Reiman suggests several ways by which the New Critics accomplished this feat: by begetting them (as "pedagogical fathers"), or by "bequeathing" to them a baleful legacy, or by causing them to suffer literary stroke under the "blaze of the New Critical moon", or by reducing them to a "shell-shocked" condition.

I now know what it must feel like to be the innocent victim of a trumped-up paternity suit. The alleged progeny of the New Critics must feel, equally shocked and will be just as hot to deny any sonship. And why should they not? In spite of Reiman's assertions, the two groups have, as an examination will show, different blood-types and a different set of genes. Far from being by-blows of reprehensible New Critics, the newest theorists can very properly claim to be the legitimate offspring of certain gentlemen of France.

In seeing matters otherwise, Reiman has, in one regard at least, been helpful. Instead of setting up a straw-man New Critic to answer vague

charges, he has specified what the New Critics and the newest theorists have in common: under New Critical influence, he says, the newest theorists hold that a literary work must be regarded as "(1) the expression of an elite author and his psyche (a strong poet agonizes, in Bloom's terminology) or (2) its linguistic medium (de Man); or (3) the affective response of a cadre of professional readers (Fish)".

Speaking for myself, I do not accept any of these three conceptions. The literary transaction, to be sure, is made from a writer to a reader through the medium of words, and any term in the process is worthy of investigation. But undue stress on the writer takes us off into biography and history, and undue stress on the reader into impressionism or reader psychology. A specifically literary criticism (if the term "literature" be deemed to have any precise meaning) would surely call for special concern for the text. Hence I am very sympathetic with de Man's concern for "close-reading". But obviously I have my differences with some of his other views. I think, for example, that it is undesirable, and probably impossible, to detach literary criticism from aesthetic values (see Kenneth R. Johnston's letter in your issue of January 7).

In this present instance, however, I am not concerned to state my disagreements with Paul de Man, but to call attention to what I am compelled to describe as Reiman's ignorance of the relation of the New Critics, whoever they are (for Reiman has failed to provide a roster of them), to the newest developments in literary theory.

Perhaps Reiman's greatest howler is to make his chief villains the members of the "Fugitive / Agrarian wing". The most able literary critics of that group are John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Donald Davidson and Robert Penn Warren. They are all poets, essayists and historians. They enjoyed literature and have communicated that enjoyment to their students and readers. They have been deeply concerned to preserve the cultural tradition of the West. Reiman has quite mistaken their characters and aims.

Since Mr Reiman has focused on the Yale English Department, it is very strange that he omits any reference to the late W. K. Wimsatt, who, along with René Wellek, was a powerful literary theorist at Yale throughout the "New Critical moon". At least one alleged New Critic, as I can testify, owes much to his conception of literary criticism. I suggest a reading of his posthumous collection of critical essays entitled *The Day of the Leopards*.

Mr Reiman begins his letter by telling us that it sometimes boggles his mind "to discover how little understood American life and culture are in Great Britain". His point may be well taken, but I must add that my mind boggles at how little Reiman, though an American, understands that amorphous, still undefined X which so many call the New Criticism. It is apparently as elusive as the snark, and I predict that, if it is ever hunted down, it will turn out to be another boojum.

CLEANTH BROOKS,
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Sir, - It remains unclear to me why your American correspondent should suppose that "Professing Literature" (December 10, 1982) was under some obligation to represent the range of views about critical theory in the United States, or anywhere else. A literary journal is surely less concerned with seeking the representative than with finding the best.

G. S. Rousseau, however, poses a more important question when he asks why theory has "swallowed up" literature in the past decade, and not only literature (Letters, January 28). It is indeed astonishing that a rebash of Victorian-Edwardian ideas (to use the Marxist of the 1840s, through Nietzsche and Derrida to Saussure's lectures of around 1910 - should ever have been successfully passed off as the

latest thing. I can think of no significant linguistic discovery of the last half-century that depends on Saussure, who died in 1913 and whose writings were dismissed by Bloomfield in America, and by Ogden and Richards in England, in the 1920s; and yet he is confidently hailed by critical theorists as the founder of modern linguistics. Our avant-garde is old hat.

Two conceivable explanations. One is the charm of the short cut: theory promises not just answers, as literary historians do, but The Answer. All very tempting to a faithless and secular age. The other is the gregarious instinct. The historian sits in a lonely room, and his specialist findings may be of interest to only a handful of readers; but a theorist can enjoy the camaraderie and hurly-burly of private debates and public conferences. Theory can be a Lonely Hearts Club. No wonder if its arguments, simply as arguments, are not very good, and no wonder if it does not wish to be told why.

GEORGE WATSON,
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Subsidizing Literature

Sir, - Thank goodness someone is still hammering away at the appalling arrogance and incompetence of the Arts Council's Literature Panel; and that Robert Hewison continues to give the matter publicity (Behind the Lines, January 28).

What is the one art in which this country is universally acknowledged to excel? It is of course literature. Yet the Literature Panel continues to receive a pittance (has it reached 2 per cent of the overall budget yet?) and even that tiny sum is underspent and often diverted to dubious uses. I don't know a single reputable poet - and I'm sure the same goes for novelists and playwrights - who isn't filled with anger and despair at the shoddy way we are treated. For some reason the idea of putting money into the hands of a writer (as opposed to an institution) scares bureaucrats witless. Executants - actors, producers, singers, conductors, museum directors - are showered with honours and paid well, sometimes astronomical salaries; the primary creators, without whom not one of those mediators would be in work, are patted on the back with a few hundreds or thousands and tossed the odd bauble. (Roy's Shaw and Strong, for example, get knightships. While Larkin and Hughes get OBEs. Will future generations approve the judgments implicit in those awards?)

Grants of £8,000-£10,000 (what family man or woman can live on less?) should be available to at least thirty or forty writers a year, every year. When I read that nearly £200,000 of the literature budget remains unspent, it makes me weep. I begin to wonder how keeping "is of the same order as Miss Havisham's. Why were the New Review and Bonaparte killed off when money of this order was readily available to be used? Why must many good writers fill their days with hack work in order to survive? If London can't or won't spend its budget, why won't they at least devote it to the regions, where we are crying out for money to spend on worthwhile causes? (One small but typical example. Anna Stevenson, currently living in Sunderland, has no income at present, and no prospect of one, unless she gives up writing poetry and takes a teaching post. Why can't we give her a grant? Isn't she good enough?)

Here in the north we have begun a campaign to get literature's abysmally increased beyond its present 3 per cent. We meet, of course, with every variety of resistance - not least the argument that what a good enough for London is good enough for us (10-2-3 per cent). At Northern Arts not only does literature receive less than the traditional big spenders like music and drama, it actually receives half that devoted to community arts, three-quarters of that devoted to photography, and only a little more

than that devoted to craft. All these regions which in briefing with good-natured writers, good poets, good novelists, good dramatists, good MidNAG, etc. and good music (e.g. Stand, Poetry Durham, etc. Women, etc.).

The greatest irony, to my mind, is this sorry state of affairs, in that precisely those whom one might expect to be sympathetic to literature - librarians, teachers, journalists, English academics, arts officials - who are in practice the most entrenched in opposition to the notion of paying actual cash in a writer's hand, take an official position of some kind, and proper job description, or make yourself to an institution, and your salary and pension are safe. Do you or a Bunting and unless you are both enough to find a Harriet Weaver, you can eat cake, while Osborne and panel consider ways to ease the flow of publishers, or send an official off on a tour abroad to promote the interests of Virginia Woolf.

It is surely time that the Literature Panel clean in this matter. They are in the business of having contemporary literature, or they are not. If they disapprove in principle of cash for writers, then they should be the honesty to say so, and shut up, or vote themselves a more honest job, such as the Bookshop Panel.

Let I be thought to have some personal axe to grind, let me add that I am one of the fortunate few who possess both of a reasonable salary and (almost) sufficient time in which to write, and hence am not a candidate for subsidy.

WILLIAM SCAMMELL,
Chairman, Literature Panel, Northorn Arts, Clare Cottage, Below, Cockermouth, Cumbria.

Authoritarianism and Democracy

Sir, - Geoffrey Marshall represents me in his review of my book *Capitalist Democracy in Britain* (January 28). One instance will suffice. I say in the book that so strong has been the traditional framework of politics in Britain been in the post-war years that there has been no support on the right for any authoritarian alternative to the liberal-democratic order. I also say that "it is in this sense that the post-war years, namely Mr. Enoch Powell, should have been an authoritarian constitutionalist" (p. 52). Marshall describes this as a "reactionary view". This is an absurd idea. Much else in his review is on this level.

RALPH MILBAND,
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The Architecture of Wren

Sir, - In his welcome review of my book *The Architecture of Wren* (member 24) Alan Hollinghurst writes for "not a mention of Sir Christopher Wren". Indeed I must blame for its exclusion from the book but other admirers of that man whose church will be glad to find it on 60 and 62 plates 97-8.

The essays in the *Wren* catalogue could not have been included in the book for two reasons. They would significantly have raised the price of the book, and in any case they represent work done after the book had been designed and typeset. The converse of "everything under one cover" is illuory.

KERRY DOWNES,
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The Asiatic Mode of Production

Sir, - The debate on the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP), which Ernest Gellner refers to in his review of Stephen P. Dunn's book on the subject (January 14), is a very complex one, and the review, though interesting and informative, tends to underestimate its complexity. I would be grateful if I might be allowed to add a few comments.

Gellner thinks that the idea of a variant AMP is incompatible with Marxism. I believe this to be inaccurate in two respects. For one thing, Marxism is primarily concerned with the analysis and critique of capitalism, whether that social system came into existence as a result of immutably historical laws, or through a number of "near-miraculous mutations". AMP might be considered incompatible with Soviet Marxism, which bases its claim to legitimacy on the fact that it supposedly represents the last and highest of a number of universal historical stages. But it is in fact impossible to squeeze the AMP into the succession of social formations, as historians in the Democratic Republic have done here, the "Oriental class society" (*orientalische Klassegesellschaft*) placed as the second universal stage, after primitive communism and before slavery. In a number of authoritative works.

2. To Gellner it is a matter of indifference whether "Asiatic" modes ever existed: the AMP, he says, may or may not be the best way of describing certain riverine societies. But this is surely to evade a central issue. The truth is that the Oriental society, characterized by lack of private property and, consequently, by stagnation and despotism, is nothing but a Western invention; as evidenced by the English's history notes, the "Oriental society" was part of the nineteenth-century Gynnasium curriculum referred to by Gellner in his book. Marx never escaped the influence of this ideological conception, though he was aware that imperialist societies in Europe and Asia, should be attached to, say, China or India. The idea that none of the labels might fit, and that there might exist specific social formations which Marx never mentioned, seems not to have occurred to him. Until it does, they will be unable to incorporate into their theories of progress made in the study of post-European history. In the hundred years since Marx's death, and their interpretations will remain inferior to those of Western macro-history, Marxist or non-Marxist.

JENS RAHBEK RASMUSSEN,
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'Despite the Welfare State'

Sir, - Rudolf Klein's incisive review of *Despite the Welfare State* by Muriel Brown and Nicola Mudge (December 17, 1982), followed by their methodological vignette from Michael Posner (Letters, December 31, 1982), have recently been brought to my attention.

I have two closely associated comments on the question: Why do social scientists keep on failing to make their mark on policy issues? First, the dues leading to a reason for the general policy ineptitude of the social scientist are almost as universal (particularly in the Western democracies) as the five-stage theory. The response, and it came from a number of French sociologists, Goddard, with the "Centre d'Etudes de Recherches Marxistes", the 1964 issue of *Le Progrès*, the journal journal of the PCF, was to have launched the debate. In some months, incidentally - it is months before the congress presented at a conference of history in Leningrad. In the collection of essays by the "whom" economist Eugen was published in Moscow, a

month or so after his death at the age of eighty-five. Largely concerned with modern capitalism, it did include one essay on the AMP, the concept of which Varga had defended in the earlier Russian debate around 1930. Translated into English, French and German, this essay was probably more influential in reviving the debate, at least in the Soviet Union, than any other single contribution.

4. For about a decade, the theory of pre-capitalist history was debated, in the Soviet Union, in France, in the GDR, and elsewhere. But in the mid-1970s, the discussions stopped abruptly; Dunn is quite right about this. In the Soviet Union, the old orthodoxy was reaffirmed, though nobody tried to prevent those still in favour of the AMP from publishing their views. Historians of Asia, as long as they paid lip-service to the theory of five universal stages, were allowed to attribute to, say, Indian feudalism any number of "specific features", such as lack of a feudal hierarchy, despotic government, and irrigation works organized by the state! In the GDR, as I mentioned above, the AMP was incorporated into a "six-step theory", between primitive communism and slave society. Neither the Russian nor the East German interpretation can of course even begin to answer the fundamental question: if feudalism was a universal phenomenon, to be found in China, India and Persia, as well as in Europe, how was it that capitalism emerged spontaneously only in Europe? Nor can either of them account convincingly for "the diversity and development that today naturally command the attention of the historian" studying non-European societies, to quote Perry Anderson.

5. Orthodox Marxist historians, it seems, cannot break out of the terminological straitjacket imposed on them by Marx. Most of the debates have concentrated their efforts on deciding which of the available Marxist labels, slave, feudal, or Asiatic, should be attached to, say, China or India. The idea that none of the labels might fit, and that there might exist specific social formations which Marx never mentioned, seems not to have occurred to him. Until it does, they will be unable to incorporate into their theories of progress made in the study of post-European history. In the hundred years since Marx's death, and their interpretations will remain inferior to those of Western macro-history, Marxist or non-Marxist.

My object in writing, however, is to dispel another of Professor Douglas's myths, again advanced without supporting evidence - that nutrition education is a disheartening failure. There are a number of things wrong with modern Western diet, but progress is being made, and good news is not so common. For America (her present abode) Mary Douglas may care to look at the *Proceedings of the Conference on the Decline of Coronary Heart Disease Mortality* (US Dept of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, 1979). Information on this country is readily available in the invaluable *Reports of the National Food Survey* (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, HMSO, annually).

Three examples for Britain. Between 1970 and 1980, consumption of wholemeal bread trebled and that of brown bread almost doubled. Sugar intake, a long-term concern of nutrition education, continued and maintained its long decline. Most encouraging is the recent shift among "visible fats". Butter purchases fell considerably between 1975 and 1980, and were largely replaced by margarine, not the traditional hard variety but the new "soft" margarine that mostly contains fewer saturates and more polyunsaturates. In consequence, the total picture of fats consumption in this country is beginning to show some improvement. Moreover, all these changes are evident, if unequally, in the four income groups of the *Food Survey*, among the poor; Mary Douglas again, and not merely the well-to-do - an unusual situation in public health that has not yet been adequately studied. How much credit for these achievements is due to nutrition education, among the multiple social influences at work, is impossible to say with any accuracy. Plausibly, we may claim some of the credit.

Of course, doctors and teachers, dietitians, health education people, home economists, nurses et al. are never satisfied. Among the many obstacles to further progress that have to be overcome are the scarcity of palatable low-fat products (available in North America and the rest of Western Europe), the relative broadness of most, wholemeal bread despite rising sales (where are the market forces?), wholly inadequate labelling of food (how many mothers even now appreciate the quantity of sugar they feed their children in popular soft drinks?), and unwholesome pressures by advertising.

Concern with such nutritional matters is complementary to, and underpins the psychological, on enjoyable and satisfying diet is the common aim. The role of food as comfort, in communication and social relations, its symbolic meanings, in no way conflicts with a diet that rectifies today's prevalent nutritional errors.

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to the editor

cial scientists apart from the masses, resulting in a moralist position reminiscent of Dostoevsky's apostolic injunction in *The Brothers Karamazov*. Consequently, this unwillingness impedes them from making programmatic policy recommendations.

As Brown and Mudge painfully document, the poverty researchers were not asked to evaluate various causes of transmitted poverty (which we in the United States have come to term "intergenerational poverty"), but to examine the objective conditions in the perpetuation of poverty. The possible distrust of the policy-makers of social scientists may reach the level of scorn if we, the social scientists, continue to force "our" answer on the rest of the society.

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Nutrition and Health

Sir, - Mary Douglas seems intent on creating her own mythology in her Viewpoint, "Foodstuff" (November 5, 1982), which I have only just read on my return from a period abroad. Let me reassure readers, from a considerable experience, that "nutritional materialism" is by no means as dominant in the thinking of health professionals as she makes out. And for such greater understanding as there is we owe much to her and her fellow social scientists.

My object in writing, however, is to dispel another of Professor Douglas's myths, again advanced without supporting evidence - that nutrition education is a disheartening failure. There are a number of things wrong with modern Western diet, but progress is being made, and good news is not so common. For America (her present abode) Mary Douglas may care to look at the *Proceedings of the Conference on the Decline of Coronary Heart Disease Mortality* (US Dept of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, 1979). Information on this country is readily available in the invaluable *Reports of the National Food Survey* (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, HMSO, annually).

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Of course, doctors and teachers, dietitians, health education people, home economists, nurses et al. are never satisfied. Among the many obstacles to further progress that have to be overcome are the scarcity of palatable low-fat products (available in North America and the rest of Western Europe), the relative broadness of most, wholemeal bread despite rising sales (where are the market forces?), wholly inadequate labelling of food (how many mothers even now appreciate the quantity of sugar they feed their children in popular soft drinks?), and unwholesome pressures by advertising.

Concern with such nutritional mat-

Rochester and Quarles

Sir, - May I add a comment and a small correction to Keith Walker's letter on this subject of September 10, 1982? The interesting similarity between Rochester's "Upon Nothing" and Quarles's *Divine Emblems* 4.13 is not simply the use of the rhymed triplet but of the rhymed triplet concluding with an Alexandrine. These are to the best of my knowledge the only seventeenth-century poems which use this particular stanza pattern. It is also 4.13 (not 2.15 of *Divine Fancies*) which I would see as containing "germs" for "Upon Nothing" - notably in the appended quotation from Augustine. (I follow this thing, I pursue that, but I am filled with nothing), and in the form of the opening question, "Where is that Good, which wise men please to call / The Chiefest? Doth there any such befall / Within man's reach? Or is there such a Good at all?" - for which Rochester's poem could easily be an ironic answer. However, the most important source is, of course, the long tradition of paradoxical eulogies of nothingness which is described in Rosalie Colio's *Paradoxical Epitaphs*.

HAROLD LOVE,
Department of English, Monash University, Melbourne.

James Joyce

Sir, - Matthew Hodgart's review of *The James Joyce Songbook* (January 14) rightly praises a useful and handsome companion to the would-be silent reader. The reviewer is on safe ground in asserting that the musical allusions in *Finnegans Wake* (especially III, i) are more broadcast than Ruth Baerle indicates. In fact, a songbook which lays claim to comprehensiveness would serve doubtful purposes and run into several volumes.

Considering his strictures on its coverage of *Finnegans Wake*, therefore, it is odd to note his remark that "it is safe to conclude that *Ulysses* is now completely understood as far as musical allusions are concerned." A small illustration from *Dubliners*, a prelude by comparison, will illustrate. From the story, "A Little Cloud":

"Very well, then," said Ignatius Gallaher, "let us have another one as a dose *ad doris* - that's good vocabulary for a small whisky, I believe."

Although this reference fails to register on Ruth Baerle's scale, it hardly requires an encyclopedic knowledge of song or an access of ingenuity to see the point of the allusion to the Scots song, considering that "Gallaher" originally made reference to "a foreign Scots mercenary", that the sentence gives us the British spelling of the drink, and that the various elements in the song have analogues in Joyce's story. I suggest that there are scores of such instances of oblique musical allusion in each of Joyce's works that have not been noted by the commentators (Hodgart and Worthington, Bowen, and now Baerle).

But Mr Hodgart exceeds the bounds of his charge when citing Joyce's hatred of violence as directed primarily or solely to the perpetrators of the Phoenix Park murders or the Fenian "revolutions" (Hodgart's word) and implicitly the IRA today. Joyce always regarded the British administrative and military presence as the fundamental source of political violence in the Ireland of his day. Perhaps, therefore, Hodgart would care to infer which "recent events" in Northern Ireland "would not have surprised" James Joyce, considering the roles and actions Joyce assigned to Rumbold and Private Compton and Carr in *Ulysses*.

COLLIN OWENS,
Department of English, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

Sir, - In the new edition of his splendid biography of Joyce, Richard Ellmann tells us (p. 51) that the young man, translated, Horace's "O fons Bandusiae". Lines 3-5 are quoted thus:

The morrow thee a kid shall bring
Boddy of rivalry and sweet
Love in his swelling form.

Before this becomes the starting point of another thesis ("Form in the Juvenilia of James Joyce"), may I point out that someone has made a slip in transcribing the manuscript? What Joyce wrote, of course, was "horns" (Horace's *cornibus*) - which suggests a different line of research.

NALL RUDD,
Department of Classics, University of Bristol, Willis Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol.

Etymologies

Sir, - Your recent correspondence on the word "squaddy" (possibly "squad") reminds of a question I have long been meaning to ask of someone more lexicographically learned than I. On page 3751 of Webster's *New International Dictionary* (Second edn, unabridged) there appears the following entry:

squaddy. A form found in Motley's *United Netherlands* resulting from a misreading or mis-copying of "baddy," a term of uncertain meaning. In a letter of T. Digges (1585-86).

Is this a hoax?

CHARLES ELLIOTT,
Alfred A. Knopf, 201 East 50th Street, New York, NY 10022.

The Enfield Find

Sir, - Much as I hate to come between a man and his dog, I must correct Eric Korn's observations (Reminders, January 21) on the strange case of Mr Mahoney and the Glasbury connection. What he purports to have found is not King Arthur's sword, but his inscribed lead funerary cross.

I am afraid Mr Korn's Chesteronian sabre-rattler must give way to a more eschatological theme: the invention of the Cross, perhaps? It's a dream of a road.

LESLIE WEBSTER,
British Museum, London WC1.

Information, please. Among this week's contributors and authors, Author appears on page 143.

143-150

quarrelled with him long before we arrived in London". He was writing to Lomb, the friend before whom he was least self-defensive: but it is easy to show that this was simply not true.

The ease with which obsessive enthusiasm turns to scorn or resentment is of course a commonplace. And, as Coleridge's mind dwelt on itself in a frustration possibly encouraged by the Morgans' remarkable patience and inability to take offence at any wayward behaviour, it is easy to understand how the enchanting Montagu became a villain, and how important it was for Coleridge to maintain a belief in his own uprightness. This perhaps explains some of the tension evident in the second of these two letters – noteworthy in the first place as concerning itself centrally with care for someone else also in that this someone else is an intimate connection of the Wordsworths (one whom the Montagus hadn't met and whom the Wordsworths probably thought they shouldn't meet); and most especially that, at a time when Coleridge was mortified and bitterly hurt by what he believed Wordsworth had said of him, he recommended Mary Monkhouse above all as someone that the Montagus should care for because this would endear them and Carlisle to the Wordsworths. Despite the shock of what he had, or believed himself to have, heard of Wordsworth's opinions of himself, the Wordsworths were still "one of the most amiable families on earth", and there is no hint of qualification in Wordsworth's being identified as "one of Basil's dearest friends". (Likewise, Coleridge's memory of having been snubbed by Carlisle is swallowed up in his earnest recommendation of Carlisle's skills.) It is understandable that in writing two or three days later to John Monkhouse Coleridge should continue to speak enthusiastically of Wordsworth's esteem for his sister Mary, although remarkable that a letter to one of the Montagus should at this time maintain Coleridge's devotion to those whom (however mistakenly) he now thought guilty of the basest treachery.

It would be pleasant to ascribe this seeming disregard of his own hurt solely to that disarming and self-revealing openness and generosity of spirit which Coleridge undoubtedly possessed and which allows one to get into touchingly close to him than perhaps to any other writer of comparable stature. But Coleridge, like most letter-writers, was in the habit of adapting the tone and often the contents of his letters to their recipients; and though it is perhaps wrong to suggest deliberate bad faith on this occasion, one cannot escape the very conscious pose of the good Christian, the expression of which takes the form of a familiar kind of rhetorical self-battering of which Coleridge, except in rare moments of self-forgetfulness, was always in need. Mrs Montagu may not have been perceptive (or generous) enough to read any but the surface message; but the letter seems to be as much a cry for help for Coleridge as for help for Mary Monkhouse.

A Stevenson discovery

James Campbell

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

An Old Song and a previously unpublished short story. Edited by Roger O. Swearingen. 102pp. Willon Books, 12, Townsend Terrace, Paisley, Renfrewshire, PA 2AX. £5.95. 0 905075 12 9

Academic research rarely makes its findings known in a way which the general reader can immediately appreciate. To the man or woman who purchases a Stevenson novel for the enjoyment that reading it will bring, mention of "the unrivalled completeness of the Robert Louis Stevenson collections at Yale" in rare-book rooms and libraries might sound like an impressive monument to his or her future reading habits and choices. However, in the course of routine secondary research on Stevenson, Richard Swearingen made a discovery which causes him to utter

THE LETTERS

Note: The letters have been transcribed as closely to the originals as printing will permit, with an attempt to reproduce Coleridge's idiosyncratic punctuation, which includes frequent dashes in place of full stops, or stops which stretch into dashes (of varying lengths) and a stroke (//) which is evidently something between a full stop and comma. Hopkins also used the stroke in his notebooks, which led Humphry House to wonder whether he might have seen Coleridge's, perhaps via E. H. Coleridge, with whom he was at school. Angle brackets indicate deletions in the manuscript.

1808

[Address] Mrs Montagu <e>/Basil Montagu's, Esqre/Merton/Surry Single Sheer
[Stamped on address panel KENDAL; on reverse 10 o'clock/DE.17/1808 F.N.D.]

My dear Mrs Montagu:

It would be well for me, – o god! what a deal of unhappiness it would have saved me, and how much occasion of joy, & yet not just offence – if the few persons, whom I indeed love and regard and have so declared myself, lived within ten miles of me. Then, not only my heart dreads to see with confidence, but experience has proved, that no one would have had cause to blame me. The grievous fault, the Queen Bee in the Hive of my Failures, which the misery which caused it and the miseries of which it has been the cause, have both joined in rendering strong and inveterate, has been my hypochondriacal Horror of Letters – without distinction, I was going to say, of Friend or Foe but this is not true – for I open a stranger's Letters with indifference, and an enemy's with curiosity – but letters from those, whom I love, lie with their seals reproaching me day after day for I have too much conscience to keep them out of sight or remembrance – and then I have the hateful necessity of making protestations of respect, love & esteem to those, <of> who <of> ought no more to have been permitted to doubt of it than they indeed would or could if they saw in and thro' my whole Heart. I have suffered more in mind from my silence to you and Montagu <e> than you would have inflicted on me if I had absolutely injured you / and those in the House did not cease to admonish me, and ask how I could expect people who were with me knew and understood – However, let me do myself the Justice to say that I did answer your questions – and that at first I was not so much in fault and that I thought and thought about it. I thought myself into languor & nervous agitation – Whether you will forgive me or no, I will tell you my whole mind – First, I assure you on my Honor, that W. W. and all this Family are most sincerely & deeply attached to Basil – and I know, that there are few women indeed whom he esteems equally with yourself, and not one

whom he at once so much esteems and admires. Secondly, if I had the power of conveying to you half the pleasures, half the advantages, and all the feelings that make up a want, which your living within a short walk of us would give me, and all this I might, you would be vexed at yourself if ever you thought otherwise. 3. The Children would receive every advantage of which they may be recipient – more than in any other situation whatsoever. I am a perpetual Thanksgiver with respect to my own. (Of) you would have been affected if you had seen the pale face, the sudden Tear-drop, and the sudden Hiding of his Face on a Chair followed by sobbing, when I mentioned the probability of you and Anne living near us. "Are you not glad then, Hartley?" No, said he – no! I am not glad. I do not know what I am – but I shall break my Heart (this in a quickened & passionate Tone) if after all it is not so. – You may smile; but I assure you, that what we all thought a Joke, gave me then and has since some uneasiness – His attachment is so very deep. 4. Your expenses of ordinary Life would, I am convinced, be about the same – certainly, I should think, not less than at Merton – & probably not greater. What then is the Objection? In my mind one, only one of importance (for the expense of a Journey to & from London once or even twice a year would only stimulate Basil to greater industry) – it is, that I deem it impossible, that Basil can be happy without your society now he has been accustomed to it – and that your residence here would unsettle his mind & insinuate a disgust to his Profession; in which he is so useful to himself and to society; and daily more eminent. I could write a Sheet on this – but do you state it fairly to your own mind – If you knew the struggles of my mind in first admitting the Objection in all its strength, & next in stating it to you, it is not three times as great an appearance of neglect & coldness as mine of late, that would prevent you from loving me – If the argument appear of no weight, let myself rejoice, ye, heart & soul – and you take it on yourselves. – Forgive me – and when I am no longer afraid, you will find me a better Correspondent monthly.

What Basil can do for me in the way of recommending my "Friend", he will – all must depend on the Zeal of my Friends – on which I have more often thrown water than oil. God bless him & you <e> the [and two more undecipherable words – all crossed out in different ink]

& poor me.
S. T. Coleridge
Grasmere, Kendal

1810

[Address] Mrs Montagu/35 Frith Street (Undated, but written between October 29 and 31, 1810)

Dear Madam

I lost my company soon after the Cloth was removed, with the intention of proceeding with dear Charles within a short time to your house. (A something within almost commands me to utter the

feeling, which the act of writing his name set afloat in my heart, that I have been his intimate seventeen long years, have received numberless kindnesses & refreshments of love from him – that once he was provoked by calumny to write unkindly to me – but never once spoke or thought unkindly of me to others. My God bless him! – But having occasion to stop at my Hotel, I found myself so exhausted & so altogether unwell, from the extreme agitation of mind, which I have this day undergone, that I did not dare trust myself into any scene or subject of conversation that might draw largely on my sensibility without an interval of Solitude, solitary self-submission, and Sleep.

But this letter I am not likely to obtain, unless I first perform a duty – the particulars of which I will explain to you as briefly as I can. – There are in town at present two Cousins of Mrs Wordsworth's, Mr John Monkhouse, and his Sister, Mary Monkhouse. The latter is the young Woman, whom I know, Mr Wordsworth of all others on earth most esteems – & who possesses His Wife & Sister excepted – the largest portion of his Love & Anxiety. – She has been in town, at Mrs Addison's, No. 38, Bedford Street, Russell Square, for some months on account of her Health, and has been under a Doctor Ainsley – Neither her Brother, or herself, are satisfied with his <tr> mode of treating of her – and his <tr> very recent experience has made me so much to what may not bring on a charge of "impudence & presumption" on me when <e> my conversation with Mr Carlisle at your house could do it; yet I may venture to say, that her mode of treatment does appear even to my understanding highly injudicious. It is enough however, that Mr Monkhouse himself has these fears – Indigestion, Flushings after meals, and all that gives alarm of Consumption, are all that I know of her case, or could learn from her Brother – But yet I have my suspicions, that not only pulmonary affection, but atony of the Bowels, and possibly an accumulation of undigested matter, is the main <matter> Evil – & <and> for that a languid Liver is the family complaint, I am quite certain. – Now Dr Ainsley has been doing her with Steel medicines, Wine, & c & c – and she gets worse & worse –

Now as Mr Carlisle can have no prejudices against her, and as I have impressed both her & her Brother with a very high idea of Mr Carlisle's skill, rather his good sense & Penetration in <this matter> all cases of this kind, Mr Monkhouse obtained a promise from me at a time when I felt no difficulty in making it & foresaw no difficulty in its performance, that I would state the circumstances to Mr Carlisle, and prevail on him to call on the young Lady. I transcribed my own feelings into the hearts of others – & I well know, that any attention or kindness to Mary Monkhouse would endear Mr Carlisle's name to one of the most amiable families on Earth – and that William & Mary Wordsworth would almost adore him for any services he might render her – even tho' it should

only be the letting her & her Brother know, what her case really is!

Now, my dear Madam! I have things to request of you & of Basil – first, is that you would use all your interest in procuring an Mr Carlisle to call on her – if possible, tomorrow – second is, that you would give me some hint with regard to Pen – Her fortune is very narrow indeed, and she is struggling on in this manner, not so, but that he is both able & able to make every acknowledgment that he owes to me – But yet – I am so embarrassed, that I heart-awkwardized whenever I have talk of money matters with persons whom I look up to – it might be happy that it might be useful for the amiable young Woman that Mr Carlisle should see her often – and between ourselves, I know that their distance would scarcely permit of two long visits every call for any length of time, daily – I pray you, do feel & speak for me more delicately, than delicacy itself enables me to do. At all events, I would have Mr Carlisle entreated to call on her, as my dear friend of one of Basil's dearest friends – and I shall advise Mr Monkhouse, who is all in a tremor, to be careful in emission, or any delicacy in offering to offer Mr Carlisle a fee – (tho' what that is, I do not know) and then I shall receive your hint from you as to the after conduct. But pray, pray, do prevail on Mr Carlisle to call on her tomorrow – if that be impossible, next day – & let me know it. Indeed, I wish you had Mary Monkhouse herself – she is so amiable, and her whole Life has been so exemplary, that this Letter would altogether superfluous – as well as repeated Assurance, that there is no one thing in the World by which I would so highly gratify William Wordsworth. It would pass for an impolitic addition with the world's Letter to a Woman, if I say, that Mary Monkhouse is the only person, whom I ever heard Wordsworth deliver praise total, & without drawback – I should be highly gratified in a line or two in answer. I will myself God permitting, call on you as soon as I am up & dressed tomorrow morning – S.T.C.

[On the verso of the outer cover] The good old son to send by the Bazaar Volume of Soull, if you have an other.

¹ In a letter to Southey (July 28, 1796) Lamb quotes from a satirical letter he had written to Coleridge on the latter's departure for Germany: "He does seem on that occasion to have been provoked by calumny, but he is a 'unkind' letter from Lamb to have very likely Coleridge destroyed."

² Robert Southey's Sermons Preached Upon Several Occasions (1797) was favourite reading of Coleridge, especially when he was in need of comfort. Quotations from Southey in the notebooks for 1810 November suggest that Mrs Montagu sent the volume along.

POETRY

House Call

No, not a Person from Porlock.
I'm here on laisura, long stretches of it.
Parlock sounds an amusing place, though –
Who knows, I might become its Person one day.
Folly? Far from it, sir. Theology.

Death's no great bugbear, I can see:
It comes to all. But ah, the sequel –
Some variation there. Which is the polar,
Or part of it.
O Lord, grant none of us his own damnation –
That's what the poet should have asked.
He couldn't see the graveyard for the angels.

You ought to straighten out your thoughts:
It helps a lot, helps Thought at least.
My tenses are the present, past and future,
Never the conditional. I learn from my mistakes.

A whole eternity to write a magnum opus in?
Oh no, good sir, not with your fingers broke.
Nar are there likely readers for it,
Not with their eyes plucked out.

Why, even this exchange would be a monologue
Did not noblesse oblige me to construe you.
Misconstrue? Truth the first casualty?
But that was long ago. Why should you worry?
Truth's not the first to suffer here . . .

One can't rely on self-punishment –
There's never enough muscle in it.

True, memory begins to go at your age.
That's to say, the pleasant memories go,
Leaving the other kind more elbow-room,
And (pending eternity) more time too.

Rehearse your sins? No need,
We both are perfect in them. As for mitigation –
That faded spirit de l'eseller is wasted
When the escalator's sloping fast.

On this patch of earth of yours,
A sailor, hero of some war or other –
Those tiny islands, Falklands? – was walking home
From barracks. Ha was mugged, was hit so hard
His mind went blank. Couldn't even remember
That heroic action. There's a pretty criminal
You're banal.

Ah that student, in what you call so quaintly
"Foreign parts", him and his girl, true lovers,
Whose people didn't hold with interracial marriage.
(Interracial! Wait till you mate with monsters.)
They took a room in a small hotel – consummated it –
And sleeping soundly. Ha awoke next morning.
She slept, soundly. There's an ingenuous gullit
You're lack gonius.

– Porely on aesthetic judgment,
And quito belido the point.

Hell, you mean? Well, hell is war.
(Parson ma, the road is paved with puon.)
Or in the words of that most copious penman:
Indescribable.
Another reason why you woo't bring off
That maximum opus, your last hope,
For armchair travellers: Which Way I Fly.

Freedom of expression? Heavens,
You've already had it! Forgotten?
These human rights are other humans' wrongs . . .
You must admit, there needs to be some difference
Of kingdom come from klegdom gone.

With which I say farewell. Utill the next time,
Friend, or – as it might be – timelessness.

D. J. Enright

Moving In

Well that is where the pictures hung:
Three squares; dust-rimmed and blank as a slammed door.

Were they masked, before, by Still Livis,
Or scenes of Yaoice; or serial studies

Often unde coming op to bowl
In sepla white fannels; his moustache

Placing at the batsman (off camera left)
I forward their letters; but I do not ask.

At last it is time to mark out my territory.
I take hammer and nails; and over the squares.

I superimpose my stuffed carp, its starboard eye
Ride high, majestically, over my new room.

Connie Bensley

Enthusiastic engagements

Grevel Lindop

GEOFFREY GRIGSON

Blessings, Kicks and Curses: A Critical Collection

279pp.
0850314372
Collected Poems 1963-1980
256pp.
0850314194
The Private Art: A Poetry Notebook
231pp.
0850314208
Alison and Busby. £9.95 each

How many contemporary English poet-critics are there of whom one could read 750 pages, verse and prose, without being bored or badly disappointed? Not many. Robert Graves, C. H. Sisson, and now, it is clear, Geoffrey Grigson, whose three new books, appearing together, are to be taken seriously, and to be read at length – to test which they pass splendidly.

If I say this with a feeling of relief, it is because Grigson's criticism, in reviews and letters to the press, has often seemed angry and impatient, while his poems have sometimes looked as if they were thinning out to a kind of diluted imagism. Reading him in bulk corrects these impressions. It becomes clear that the criticism, however polemical, is powered by enthusiasm and a delight in discovery, and that there are poems of great and poignant honesty, which go beyond the mere noting of moods or impressions.

Blessings, Kicks and Curses (an almost self-parodying title) collects Grigson's essays and reviews from 1974 to 1981, adding a few earlier pieces. Most of the articles are about poetry, and the poets dealt with range from Campion to Ted Hughes. The book begins discouragingly, with a rather laboured satire on English intellectual life in the 1950s which might better have been left in the magazine where it had slept contentedly since 1957. Matters improve at once, however, when Grigson comes to the discussion of individual poets. He censures (in an essay on Allen Tate which is a finely judged exercise in faint prose) a criticism which is "too plain, too removed, with no main root in a layer of sensation", and it is in the criticism of enthusiasm and engagement that he excels. Perhaps for this reason he is at his best when he examines "minor" or "neglected" poets: there are good pieces on Camplon and Barnes, on Flecker and Crabbe, as well as excellent essays on Chatterton and Andrew Young, and a short introduction to Wyndham Lewis. Of Chatterton, Grigson can value the "power to write strong lines of suggestive exoticism" – those tropes pastoral with their rich, incongruous colour-splashes of macaws and scarlet jasmine – and still conclude that "in exzexo he remains about the most tedious poet in the English canon". This kind of plain-spoken discrimination, a refusal to melt his judgments down to a safe average, makes the essays continually exciting.

No one is going to agree with everything in the book. Grigson is pleasantly sceptical about Rosenberg – "aesthetic turbulence in an ordinary mind" – and has qualified respect for Pound and Ford Madox Ford: "both these men of remarkable slight knew about the workings of a true literature they couldn't themselves produce. Both helped others to produce it." On the other hand, his "reverence" for Wilfred Owen is surprising, and he can see no good in the poems of Keith Douglas. But then, isn't the best criticism that which provokes us to argue as we read, taking its chances and, when wrong, being so for interesting reasons? And when it comes to detailed insights (which, after all, are the lifeblood of criticism) Grigson is so often right.

Grigson was also right (in a way that has been of some historical importance) about Auden, publishing him in his magazine *New Verse* from 1933 and becoming thereafter a consistently intelligent and persuasive advocate for Auden's work. A fine essay here, "A Meaning of Auden", recalls his early discovery of Auden's

poetry and communicates in a memorable vignette the delight of receiving the poems Auden submitted to *New Verse*:

They came on hall sheets of notepaper, on long sheets of lined foolscap, in thin writing an airborne daddy-longlegs might have managed with one dangling leg, sometimes in pencil, sometimes smudged and still less easy to decipher. They had to be typed before they went to the printer, and in the act of typing each poem established itself. It was rather like old-fashioned developing in the dark-room, but more certain, more exciting.

At the far end of the enormous room, an orchestra is playing to the rich. – there at last on the white page, to the clearer still on the galley, the first outline sight of a new poem joining our literature.

It would be good to have more such essays on Grigson's masters and contemporaries, but he is tantalizingly reticent about Eliot and Yeats, and even the discussion of Auden is short and mainly concerned with very early work. One reason for this may be that *Blessings, Kicks and Curses* is mostly made up of reviews, and other occasional pieces. Auden's death and the appearance of Edward Mendelson's *The English Auden* prompted articles, but in the case of other great moderns the stimulus may have been lacking. More important, however, is Grigson's fundamental distrust of criticism. The best critic, he implies, is the one who quotes (not argues or analyses) best; he dislikes book-length criticism, avoids reading books about poets who are his contemporaries and in particular "cannot bear to look at Auden; he is annoyed by the fact that books about poetry always seem in greater demand than books of good poems. Grigson is honourably reluctant to add to the deafening critical barrage."

The most useful thing criticism can do, he suggests, is to celebrate the good which has been overlooked, and he brings to light a number of neglected poets and poems: Flecker; Massfield's "Daffodil Fields" for example; and Tennyson's brother Charles, who made poems of the Steam Threshing Machine, and the Hydraulic Ram, and "Little Phoebe killed by a fall of the cliff when she was out collecting shells – She took the homeward path that led Beneath yon dark-blue ridge, when sad to tell."

Grigson's brisk prose is often brightened by surprising, appropriate metaphors and similes, as when he recalls reading Camplon's poems "much as one will play over and over again a short lyrical gramophone record, or listens to the recent songlines of Edward Thomas's prose "too much metal-detecting over the prose word-heaps". A poet's prose, to risk a phrase too often sentimentally applied

Collected Poems 1963-1980 is a companion volume to the 1963 *Collected Poems* and gives an opportunity to see how Grigson's work has developed over the past twenty years. Still brisk epigrammatic and sharply visual, the poems in the new volume are generally more relaxed and informal in tone. There is a larger proportion of rumbustious satirical poems and more, too, of the descriptive work, exploring with a curiously analytical eye English and French landscapes, buildings and skies:

In the sky scene as I move I notice
The greyness of the underside of the great
Cloud now above me; and a round
Hole through this grey, and in this hole
Blue, and the white
Top of a thunder-cloud unseen otherwise
away

In the queue of the clouds.
The content for a palpitating accuracy here is typical, as is the way variable line length and a flexible, bouncy rhythm are used to produce energy and surprise, pointed out by alliteration and internal rhyme. Hopkins is clearly a subtle, beneficial influence on many of these poems.

Like Hopkins, however, Grigson also has his mantras, and they are especially prominent in the first half of

the volume. Among these quirks – a set of habits rather than a style – are a love of eccentric word-order, internal rhyme and repetition, a self-conscious announcement of intentions, and a tendency to see everything through the spectacles of books or paintings. The last two features, especially, become a distraction. There is too much of "I coast add . . . and countless times, 'I say.' One tire, all of 'Marvell's poem on Caesarian section', 'sex jokes . . . Ancient as Brueghel', 'hot rootless/restful peak Donne pondered on', 'dawn, as L. Babel wrote', 'grapes as Pol de Limbourg/painted them' and 'Cavafy has taught me/That much' and "it was small-fingered Hardy/thinking of the dead I thought about". One would prefer to have the poems without the shuffling, without the validation borrowed from other artists and writers.

When Grigson lets his own eye and voice work without hesitation or interference, the results are excellent. There are several fine poems about childhood, notable among which is "Raw Ream: Remembering, Now Dead, a Teacher" (my dictionary glosses "raw ream" as Cornish dialect for "cold cream"). Here is the last stanza:

Carrying white eggs for payment
I walk to you over the green
to learn reading, hearing this
sunshine of silence, Minnie, I say, these
are my money. You taught, take the eggs,
(which you will give back to my mother),
skin ream off a pan, spread for me honey
on bread, yellow ream over honey.

The plainness of the language, and its disjunctions ("hearing this/sunshine of silence") convey the freshness and strangeness of the child's perceptions, at once close and distant in memory.

Some of Grigson's best and most characteristic work has the air of being simultaneously serious and frivolous – a delicate poise which is often part of the subject itself.

It is time for more to be covered in deep soil, and to sink.
It is time for mither less to be printed
Or scattered through oil, time for more
To be written again, by hand,
In black ink.

Too much is found,
It is time to tread, not to dig.
Let much more be lost through
Holes in our cotton pockets.
More spent on sherbet, and on the quick
Transience of Roman candles and rockets.
(If "transience" is a misprint, it is a happy one.) The frequency of really good poems is greater in the second half of the volume. There are a number of extended meditative or elegiac poems here which deserve special mention. "Gatekirk After Years" explores the value of shared perceptions of landscape, deliberately recalling and diverging from major poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge; a taciturn and enriching use of allusion. "The Fleets: Homines Ludentes alque Praecales" develops its reflections on religion, art and happiness from a passage of memorably exotic visual description:

Cerulean hemlock through a high
Village caris which are pink and red
With petals of geranium. Spokes,
Rims, hubs, men, are pelted with
Ceruleum. So this over-the-ocean
Village plays, by custom and by rule.
And candles elsewhere today are set
In hollows of cathedrals on their
Iron trays and women pray, not all
Because they are old or mad.

And there is Grigson's elegy for Auden, a particularly strong and poignant poem, appropriately tinged with Auden's own tone of voice:

For whom who were young
You became living's heat, leaving
Mangled, for all of these years
The impover of these years
You were our fixture, our rhythm,
Speaker, bestower, of love for us all
And forgiving, not of condemning,
extended

To all who would read or would hear
Your engowment of words.
"To Wyatt Auden" occurs just past the middle of the volume, and although Grigson has written against making biographical deductions from the ordering of poems, I wonder if what seems to me the greater achievement of the second half of the collection

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Indicates that Grigson's admiration for Auden inhibited his own work whether the other poet's genius overawed him. At any rate, the *Collected Poems* show a fine late flowering, not only in the reflective longer poems but in the shorter lyrics, which are especially powerful on the subject of growing old. Here, complete, is one such poem, "On Not Learning Russian," which is also in a way a poem of love for another poet — surely Pasternak:

Peculiar Alphabet, you lay, in
My dream, widely, letting me in,
Conferring on me your unfamiliar
Shapes, your sounds also.
For the sake of him.

But it is too late. I look
Through your great railings.
Your revenue. Leading in glitter
To your palaces of more brilliant
Yellow and blue.

I cannot pick the great look.
Now, Cold Alphabet, snow falls.
Too late for me to begin,
Too late to attempt to come in,
Even for him.

The *Private Art* is an edited commonplace-book: a collection of *poèmes*, quotations, notes and miniature essays on poetry. The result is marvellously entertaining and stimulating both to read entire and to dip into. There are explosions of splendid common sense ("Tom Gunn remarks that 'most American poets consider metre obsolete'; to which the corollary must be that most American poets are not poets in any sense yet known to the human race") and bracing aphorisms on the poet's predicament ("The rewards of being a good poet are both very great and as a rule very small. The very great rewards are to be earned honestly or not at all. The small rewards are so small that it isn't worth cheating to win them"). There are reflections on poetry and landscape, on the creative process, on translation, on the critics and biographers with whom poets have to contend. The whole communicates, a powerful, individualistic delight in poetry, thrown into relief by an impatience with the merely fashionable or academic. The *Private Art* is a book one will return to often.

These three books mark a substantial achievement, one which by its nature is hard to define and yet important. As critic, editor and anthologist, Grigson's career has been dedicated to a sharing of his pleasure in art, literature and landscape. He has been notable for his avoidance of allegiance to any one critical orthodoxy, his championing of an educated individuality of perception and taste. This has sometimes shown itself as sheer delight in argumentative-ness and controversy; still, in an age dominated by the tedium of "consensus" his example is one for which we should be grateful.

The Spirit That Moves Us Reader: A Seventieth Anniversary Anthology, 1913-1982 (edited by Morris Sklar, 1982, \$12, paperback \$6.95) 30370 14 7) is a selection of poems, stories and illustrations published by *The Spirit That Moves Us* magazine during those years, and contains an index to all issues of the magazine as well as work by, among others, Marjorie Pryor, Barbara Ungar, Anselm Hollo, and Charles Bukowski. Also from the Spirit That Moves Us Press in Iowa City, Iowa, *Editor's Choice: Literature and Graphics from the U.S. Small Press, 1965-1977* (edited by Morris Sklar and Jim Mulac, 501pp, \$9.50, 0 930370 05 8) is a selection of poetry, fiction, essays and graphic art chosen from among work nominated by the editors of *Independent*, "non-commercial" presses and magazines. Both are available from PO Box 1585, Iowa City, Iowa. Closer to home, the magazine *Poetry Durham* has produced two issues to date (Number 1: Summer 1982, 24pp, Number 2: Winter 1982, 25pp, ninety poems each). The magazine is edited by Michael O'Neill and Garoth Reeves; the first issue contains poems by Fleur Adcock, David Constantine, Douglas Dunn, Roy Fisher, Grevel Lindop, C. H. Sisson and others; the second, by Tony Curtis, Gavin Ewart, Joachim du Bellay (translated by C. H. Sisson), D. W. Hammett, Peter Reading, William Scammell, Michael Schmidt and Anne Stevenson. Subscriptions (£2.50 for three consecutive issues, including postage) should be sent to *Poetry Durham*, Department of English, University of Durham, Elvet Riverside, New Elvet, Durham, DH1 3JT.

Terminal ruminations

Peter Scupham

Geoffrey Grigson

The Cornish Dancer and Other Poems
64pp. Seeker and Warburg. £4.95.
0 436 18805 8

The intimations which haunt *The Cornish Dancer*, Geoffrey Grigson's new collection, are those of death, and Grigson's nervy, unreconciled probing of this theme gives the book an air of the *donne* *macabre*. Throughout the collection windows open on lives approaching their ends, yet struggling still with gestures and memories. The bleak tone, the close substance of certain poems are reminiscent of Hardy, as the ruminations of "Sick Priest" or "Outside his Verandah", where old dissatisfactions press on lives moving towards oblivion, or in "The Widow".

On her broken whirling wood, on folds
Of old curtains, alone,
She will pass most of to-day
Bach, Haydn and Mendelssohn.
When death does arrive, Grigson is drawn to further enigmatic ponderings. Why, he asks in "How Is It?", do we reverse

That invisible husk which now is no
More than
Calcium and dust?

Two particularly memorable poems, setting images of life against this euldem and dust, are "The Return", where Grigson recalls his brother coming home on leave in the First World War and captures the child's incomprehension and depth of feeling, "Château on Le Grand Bey", where a great life is simplified to the passionate beach-games of childhood and the finality of old bones lying blocked under the "shit and lit/ol gulls".

An unstrained meditative grace makes "A Visit to the Ledger Stones of Clenac Ancestors" particularly attractive, though the sting comes in the final refrain:

God's peace they had promised
Their people, which their descendant also
Would welcome, supposing it came.

Going gentle into whatever good
nights are waiting is not the prevailing tone, though. There is a fine, testy drooliness about "Drunk Drivers See the Signs at Whitman" and "Saint in the Summer Rain"; the first poem in broad comedy, but when the name-sharing saint and poet exchange staves the poet has the last word, offering the saint's skull the reflection that

It can't after all be too bad
To be boxed in the null
Preposterous calm of the dead.

The spicy "shorts" which cluster at the end of the book sustain this *memoir* more time, juggling old age, ashes and other such intimations of mortality "on this side and that side/Of the Absurd".

But this is not a gloomy performance. Grigson writes with an astute playfulness which finds full expression in the six translations from Christian Morgenstern. It also colours those poems in which Grigson sets his affection for the vanished or vanishing richness of life against contemporary tat and rootlessness, symbolized by the municipal park:

And this stall sells hot-dogs and tea.
Pencil as well as provided tree.
For writing our messages where we peep.
Under the greenwood tree.

In "Return to England" the solid green of the June countryside is the green of a vegetation which has ousted all other colourful contenders for our attention. A "Heavy blackish monotone of the prose of green, / All of it, after all, fat with profit, and obscene." Such poems are saved from old-buffaliness and nostalgia by their pauses and indications, the reminder in "Return to England" that it is not "God's" sentiment to regret these ancient

colours", whatever good conferred on us; or in "Oak and Crow" that though the famous "old egg-layers" were boiled to the child's "old black hen" was set up to the dinner-guests, a picture of the fanciful vacuities of science faces whose "cold crews" are contrasted to "Sad simple subaqueous Nemo", as the brutal technology "Tosses up" draw human eyes foolishly upon it. "As if our earth-grace / Write as enough for our case."

After all, it is "earth-grace" that has always been Grigson's strength and he has devised a simple conversational lyricism to collect in "Blue Shell", the shell's shape heraldy is set "Among still and sandhoppers"; and there is a particular pleasure in sharing with Grigson in the ceaseless possibility of surprise and transformation held by the slight and disregarded, the "age sounds... Trembling and clear, / Corn-golds, the dropped feather, / For the 'stink and sandhopper' Death, who should have the last word here

...takes off
All who are good and true.
But — pin on his medals
And orders — he
Takes off the others too.

Paperbacks in brief

DAVID BONAVIA

The Chinese: A Portrait
317pp. Penguin. £1.95.
0 14023 94 0

David Bonavia's account of contemporary China, first published in 1980, has been "substantially revised and updated" for the paperback edition. As *The Times* correspondent in Peking from 1972, Bonavia witnessed the end of one era in recent Chinese history — the purging of the Gang of Four and the death of Mao in 1976 — followed by a period of increased contact and more open communication with the Western world. Bonavia includes many personal reminiscences and anecdotes in his informed account. His first hand experience of life in the Soviet Union, where he was correspondent for three years, provides a valuable dimension and the opportunity for interesting comparisons of aspects of life under socialism.

E.W.

Hajo Holborn

A History of Modern Germany
Princeton University Press
Volume 1, 395pp. £6.50.
0 691 00795 0
Volume 2, 357pp. £7.30.
0 691 00796 9
Volume 3, 844pp. £8.10.
0 691 00797 7

A *History of Modern Germany* was originally published between 1959 and 1969. Designed to provide both the general reader and the student with a reliable source of information and a guide towards an understanding of the past five centuries of German history, the first volume deals with the Reformation, the second volume covers the period 1648-1840, and the third takes the story from 1840 to the end of the Second World War. Writing about the first two volumes a reviewer in the *TLS* observed (September 23, 1967): "It very much looks as though *Kulturgeschichte* interests Professor Holborn more than any other aspect of history — and this particular penchant has its most worthwhile expression in his sections on theology, philosophy and the like. Social history, on the other hand, tends to be treated rather cursorily." According to a review in the *TLS* (August 28, 1970) of the final instalment of this "painstakingly comprehensive work", however, "almost no important done, thought or written during half a millennium of German history has been omitted".

K.M.

The Guys and Dolls Book

127pp. Methuen. £4.95.
0 413 51760 8

"The second best American play" (*Death of a Salesman* came first) is how Kenneth Tynan described *Guys and Dolls*. The *Guys and Dolls Book* includes the complete libretto and lyrics of the musical (music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, book by Jo Swerloff and Abe Burrows), the original Damon Runyon story which inspired the work — "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown", an appreciation of Loesser by Caryl Chessman and Ned Sherrin, an article by Richard Eyre on directing the recent successful production at the National Theatre, a review of that production by Russell Davies, and a large number of photographs from it.

It is interesting to compare the differences between the musical and the original story, especially in the way that "Sly" Masterman becomes a missionary.

A.J.H.

AMELIA B. EDWARDS

A Thousand Miles Up the Nile
499pp. Century. £5.95.
0 7126 0038 8

A *Thousand Miles up the Nile*, first published in 1877, records the first visit to Egypt of Amelia B. Edwards, later to become a leading Egyptologist, and has the double interest of being an

outstanding travelhook by a prolific (if now little read) novelist and an account of a journey which was a turning-point in her career (and which included her own first efforts at excavation, at Abu Simbel). It is clear from the start that her imagination engages deeply with the country, and she soon reaches the state of mind in which she simply cannot see enough temples and ancient remains — unlike her amusingly caricatured fellow-travellers. Her eye is marvellously sharp, she is both witty and compassionate in her comments on Egyptian life, and she has, when needed, a vein of unaffected purple which shows how inexorably and ineradicably Egypt was finding a place in her heart.

A.J.G.H.

PETER MAYNE

A Year in Marrakesh
172pp. Eland Books, 53 Eland Road,
London SW11. £3.95.
0 90787 30 5

First published in 1953 as *The Alleys of Marrakesh*, this is an account of nearly two years which Peter Mayne spent in the old quarter of Marrakesh, sharing the life of his neighbours, gradually being accepted by them and inducted into their ways and habits. He conveys in a gentle and sympathetic way the Muslim mentality, and the vast difference between it and our own, especially in its attitude to money and human relations.

The original *TLS* reviewer wrote (January 8, 1954): "Mr Mayne is... quietly observant, a man of patience and receptivity in a strident time. Never does he raise his voice or heighten his style... No less exceptional is his humour, pervasive at a level to which we are hardly accustomed, bludgeoned (as we have been) by the wisecrack and conditioned in response to a flashy verbal wit."

M.F.

FREYA STARK

The Valley of the Assassins and Other Persian Travels
The Southern Gate of Arabia
365pp and 328pp. Century, 76 Old
Compton Street, London W1V 5PA.
£4.95 each.
0 7126 0025 6 and 7126 0053 1

"An imaginative aunt who, for my ninth birthday, sent a copy of the *Arabian Nights* was, I suppose, the original cause of trouble." The trouble was Freya Stark's enduring fascination with the Middle East, and two of its most attractive consequences have now been published in paperback on the occasion of her nineteenth birthday. This is travel writing of a traditional kind, not always free of cliché. The fact that hardship and discomfort are so little mentioned gives a rather disembodied feeling to the actual journeying. But this is no great fault, and Miss Stark's observations and descriptions are at their best accurate, beautiful and funny.

G.J.S.

PETRU DUMITRIU

To the Unknown God
Translated by James Kirkup
247pp. Collins. £5.95.
0 002 26336 6

The Romanian writer Petru Dumitriu, born in 1904 and for the communist regime in his native country after studies in wartime Germany, was three times awarded the State Prize for Literature and rose to be director of a state publishing house. In 1960 he escaped to the West and continued writing in French. His spiritual Odyssey, *Au Dieu inconnu*, was published in 1979. It is an autobiographical account of and meditation upon his experiences of Nazism, communism, socialist realism, Western capitalism and "freedom", existentialism, revolutionary violence and terrorism, in conjunction with the awareness, since childhood, of the Danube, not so much of God's love or even existence — for there was too much even existence — as of his nihilistic

A.J.H.

AMELIA B. EDWARDS

A Thousand Miles Up the Nile
499pp. Century. £5.95.
0 7126 0038 8

A *Thousand Miles up the Nile*, first published in 1877, records the first visit to Egypt of Amelia B. Edwards, later to become a leading Egyptologist, and has the double interest of being an

Author, Author

Competition No 109

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than March 4. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct — in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 109" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on March 11.

1 "Ooh!" said Susan, "I'd thought he was a man. Is he — quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."

2 The lion grieves loped from the shade
And on our knees their muzzles laid.

31 went to the dimly lighted bar to get some beer and on my way there tripped over what I had thought to be a stuffed lion. I was somewhat taken aback when the lion lolled on its back.

As I stood in amazement the proprietor cried "Gratze-le" and I rather gingerly tickled the lion's chest. It purred like a mowing machine.

Competition No 105
Winner: Mrs Joan Feisenberger
Answers:

1 Where winter descends with her amassing snow
The nardus and pomegranate grow,
And through the forest the frozen doe.

The greyhound, the griffin and honey-bear go.
Charles Causley, "A True Ballad of Sir Henry Trevelyan".

2 The trees with silver rime bedight
Their branches bare.
By day no sun appeared; by night
The hidden moon shed theivish light
In the misty air.
Robert Bridges, "I never shall love the snow".

3 Is it Winter the Huntsman
Who gallops through his iron glades,
Creaking his cruel whip
To the gathering shades?
Osbert Sitwell, "Winter the Huntsman".

Among this week's contributors

NICHOLAS J. ALLEN is a lecturer in the Social Anthropology of South Asia at the University of Oxford.

MAURICE BLOCH is Reader in Anthropology at the London School of Economics.

C. S. L. DAVIES' *Peace, Print and Protestantism, 1540-1558* was published in 1976.

D. J. ENRIGHT is the editor of *The Oxford Book of Death*, which will be published in April.

GAVIN EWART's most recent collection of poems, *More Little Ones*, was published last month.

APRIL FRIZLON's biography of Lorenzo da Ponte, originally published in 1956, has been reissued this month as a paperback.

PETER GATHERCOLL is the curator of the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge.

PIERS GRAY's *T. S. Eliot's Intellectual and Poetic Development: 1909-22* was published last year.

PETER GREEN is Professor of Classics at the University of Texas, Austin.

ANDOR KOMMA is a lecturer in English at the University of Keele.

J. A. GUY's *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More* was published in 1980.

D. W. HAARNESS's *Northern Ireland since 1920* will be published later this year.

SIE DAVIO HUNT is the editor of *Footprints in Cyprus: an Illustrated History* which will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

SIE PETER STRAWSON is Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at the University of Oxford.

WALTER LAQUEUR's books include *Weimar: a Cultural History 1918-33*, 1976, and *Terrorism*, 1978.

ZACHARY LEAOER's *Reading Blake's Songs* was published in 1981.

GREVEL LINDOP's biography of Thomas De Quincey, *The Opium Eater*, was published in 1981.

JOHN HOPE MASON's most recent book is *The Irresistible Diderot*, 1982.

R. B. McDOWELL is co-author of *Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952: An Academic History*, which was published last year.

FLORENCE O'DONOGHUE is the editor of *Sworn to be Free: The Complete Book of IRA Jailbreaks 1918-1921*, 1971.

PETER SCUPHAM's most recent collection of poems, *Summer Palaces*, was published in 1980.

KEVIN SHARPE is the editor of *Facton and Parliament: Essays in Early Stuart History*, 1979.

LOED SCAMMAN has been a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary since 1977.

CHRISTOPHER THOENE's *Racial Aspects of the Far Eastern War of 1941-1945* was published in 1980.

DAVID TROTTEE's study of twentieth-century American, English and Irish poetry, *The Making of the Reader*, will be published later this year.

WILLIAM TWINING is the Quain Professor of Jurisprudence at University College London.

SIE PETER STRAWSON is Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at the University of Oxford.

Information, please

American-Indian poetry of the twentieth century: references or information sought on this topic; for research purposes.

88 avenue d'Italie, 75015 Paris.
Thoddeus Cohill (1867-1934), inventor of an electronic music synthesizer known as the Telharmonium: letters, photographs, personal recollections, sound recordings, for a study of the instrument.

5 Jones Street, Apt 4, New York, New York 10014.

S. J. Parnham (1904-79), American humorist, reminiscences, letters, photographs or other information, for a biography.

do. G. F. Parnham's *Song*, 200 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016.

John Cowper Powys: location of uncollected poems, either in MS

form or printed in journals, not already printed in volume form; for a complete edition of Powys's poems.

8 Platts, Lyndhurst, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 2JX.

Shakespeare and music: any information on music which sets words by Shakespeare or which is connected with his work; for *A Shakespeare Music Catalogue*, an annotated bibliography now in preparation.

Odean Long.

Shakespeare Music Catalogue, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada V8W 2Y2.

Jacques Tati, film director and actor: personal recollections of Tati, his family, his friends or his obligations; for a biography.

James Harding.

100 Ridgmount Gardens, London WC1E 7AZ.